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JUNE 1982 NUMBER 52

THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

TOURNAMENT OGRE/G.E.V.
BASIC *OGRE* DEFENSE
THE LONE GEV
OGRE SQUASH

MINOR INSTITUTIONS OF CIDRI
EXPANDING *ASTEROID*
SPY-CARS IN *TRAVELLER*
AND 10 PAGES OF REVIEWS

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THE SPACE GAMER

NUMBER 52 – JUNE 1982

IN THIS ISSUE

This is our special *Ogre/G.E.V.* issue, which sports three articles on the games (two strategy pieces, one game variant), two new units, and an obnoxiously good piece of fiction by Mike Stackpole.

Readers not interested in *Ogre/G.E.V.* aren't left in the cold, though: We also have Forrest Johnson's article on TFT solitaire characters between games, W.G. Armintrout on assembling a gaming club, William A. Barton writing on James Bondian vehicles in *Traveller,* and Steve Jackson on rule variations for GDW's *Asteroid,* plus the normal assortment of columns, departments, and capsules. Have fun.

—Aaron Allston

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Where We're Going

Exhaustion city. We've been filling orders for Pocket Box games . . . and filling orders . . . and filling re-orders. It seems as though we may, just possibly, have a hit on our hands. It also seems as though we may have a little trouble keeping up with the demand! Ah, well . . . there are worse problems to have.

Shakeout, Part II

A couple of months ago, our "state of the industry report" predicted really big changes at SPI within the year. And *last* month, just as TSG was going to press, the word came in that the TSR empire had effectively bought SPI out. All we were able to do in TSG was drop in a box with a bare-bones announcement. The May-June issue of *Fire & Movement,* though, carried a full report on the takeover. Nick Schuessler, who is F&M's managing editor, managed something difficult in magazine publishing – especially with a bimonthly schedule – namely, some genuine journalism. He managed to tie down a good collection of facts, historical background, and informed comment about the takeover – and then totally rewrite it a week later when Avalon Hill scored a return coup by hiring most of the SPI design staff. The result: a story so timely that the first many gamers knew of the takeover was the "TSR BUYS SPI" headline on the magazine cover.

We chose *not* to reprint the whole story here in TSG: enough of you subscribe to both magazines that it would have been unfair duplication of material. So if you're interested in the inside details on the first victim of the Big Shakeout, that's where to look.

And, while the giant was dying, a sparrow fell. We have a reliable report that Group One, publisher of several approved-for-*Traveller* ship supplements and adventures, has cancelled all ongoing projects, and will be selling its inventory and going out of business. So it goes.

Mail Order Blues

From time to time, there is a problem with a game order or subscription. If you live in the U.S. or Canada and an order takes over two months to reach you, there's something wrong. To achieve a delay like this without actually losing the order, it takes three problems in a row:

(a) the Post Office is slow in getting it us, and

(b) then we are much slower than usual in filling it, and

(c) the P.O. is slow *again* in getting it to you.

So if you haven't gotten an order after a couple of months, call or write (writing is better). Send us your name (spelled clearly), the date you ordered. your address, and a copy of the cancelled check. The check only becomes necessary when we can't find a record of your order. In that case, it may be your only insurance of getting the order.

For subscription problems, the most important factor is that we get your name spelled clearly, and exactly the same way it appears on your address label. A copy of the label is best of all. If you haven't received a TSG by the end of the month on the cover, it's probably been lost in the mail. If you move, send us the address change ASAP, because the Post Office eats or destroys second-class mail unless you guarantee forwarding postage – and we *don't* replace issues lost because *you* didn't change your address.

To avoid problems like this in the first place, make sure you've included your full address in your order (not just on the envelope). If you charge your order, make sure the number is right and the card is good. If you think your order will exceed a pound, give us your home address instead of a Post Office box, because we'll probably send it UPS to get it to you faster. And be twice as careful around Christmas!

But He Spelled Our Name Right . . .

Those of you who get Lou Zocchi's "Hex-O-Gram" may have noticed some interesting items in the April issue (28). Some of the ads for new products available from Lou were . . . shall we say, not quite accurate? At any rate (to forestall the letters I can see you writing): No, we didn't really publish ***Death Duel with the Destroyers.*** Fantasy Games Unlimited did. No, we didn't really publish ***Man, Myth, and Magic.*** Yaquinto did. (And it's a game, not an accessory.) The name of the robot supertank in our game is "Ogre," not "Orge." The miniatures he is selling are Heavy Tanks; the reference to "Orge 3 Tanks" refers to the old Martian Metals stock number for the heavy tank, NOT the Ogre Mark III. And ***Worlds of Wonder*** (reviewed here last issue) is not by Swedish Game Productions as the Hex-O-Gram says, but by Chaosium. Lou tells us that issue had a few typos in it . . .

More Pages! More Pages!

If this issue feels a little bit heavier, there's a reason. It's eight pages longer than last month's. We were really pleased to be able to go to the larger size, since this is a special issue. We didn't have to choose between running lots of ***Ogre*** material and getting a good mix of articles on other subjects; the extra pages let us do both!

Those extra pages came from the only place any magazine is likely to get them: more advertising sales. So throw some business to our advertisers, and let them know where you saw the ad – that way, we can do this again every month.

Speaking of advertisers, this is a good time to repeat our policy on play-by-mail ads. We will *not* accept an ad from a new PBM operation unless we've seen the rulebook, some actual turn sheets, and a list of satisfied players. We've had several requests already that we relax this policy "to help new companies get started." Sorry . . . but in the past we've run such ads and *you've* spent your money for turns you never got because the companies ran into problems. We won't be a party to that any longer. If you see a PBM ad here, it means we've checked out the company, and they are, to the best of our knowledge, actually in operation and running turns.

–Steve Jackson

Next Issue

Headed your way in July, we have the fourth of the Marischal TRAVELLER adventures;

"Giving Humans an Even Break in THE CREATURE THAT ATE SHEBOYGAN";

A featured review of GDW's STRIKER;

More Computer as Familiar;

A new regular column; and

The Superdome.

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Here's what's BRAND NEW from Avalon Hill:

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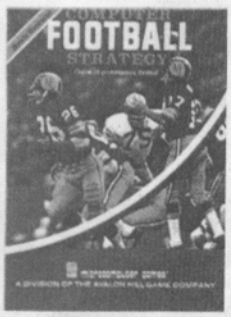
A solitaire computer game that challenges the human player to explore the four levels of an alien spacecraft's maze-like corridors and rooms in 3-D simulated graphics, all the while avoiding robots programmed to blast any intruders. In order to win, the human must destroy all power generators and escape or hunt out and annihilate the killer robots. **VOYAGER** comes with color-animated graphics and sound capabilities for computers so equipped.



COMPUTER FOOTBALL STRATEGY

Thrilling computer version of Avalon Hill's famous board game. Based on the award-winning Sports Illustrated game of professional football; forces the player to constantly make the right decisions about his team's offensive and defensive formations. Match wits against the computer or against a live opponent.

DNIEPER RIVER LINE

A fictionalized engagement between the Russian and German forces in the southern Ukraine in 1943. The game challenges you, the German commander, to repel Russian efforts to breach the Dnieper River defensive positions. Soviet units, controlled by the computer, seek to overrun the thin German line and capture sufficient objectives to attain victory. **DNIEPER RIVER LINE** has four levels of difficulty and comes complete with over 300 illustrated counters and a mounted mapboard.

CONTROLLER

A **real-time** simulation of air traffic control in which you will have to guide the approach and landing sequence of up to 8 aircraft. There are three types of aircraft: Light Planes, Airliners, and Private Jets, with each type having a different rate of climb, turning ability, stall speed, ceiling, fuel consumption and fuel capacity. **CONTROLLER** transforms your microcomputer screen into a realistic "radar scope"; also, each aircraft's heading, velocity, and altitude is continuously displayed on a separate chart next to the radar scope.

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Dnieper River Line		32K	32K	32K	48K				25.00
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GUNS OF FORT DEFIANCE

In this exciting arcade game, you are the commander of a 19th century artillery piece in a besieged stockade. For each shot you must specify a type of ammunition—ball, cannister, shell or spherical case—and fuse length (if applicable), and set the elevation and deflection of the cannon. The computer controls the enemy forces, randomly attacking with cavalry, infantry or another artillery piece.

GALAXY

Have you ever wanted to conquer the universe? In **GALAXY,** players send their galactic fleets out to explore and conquer the universe, solar system by solar system. The planets discovered may be barren worlds or they may possess immense industrial capacity and defensive ships to resist colonization. **GALAXY** comes with sound effects (for computers with sound capability)

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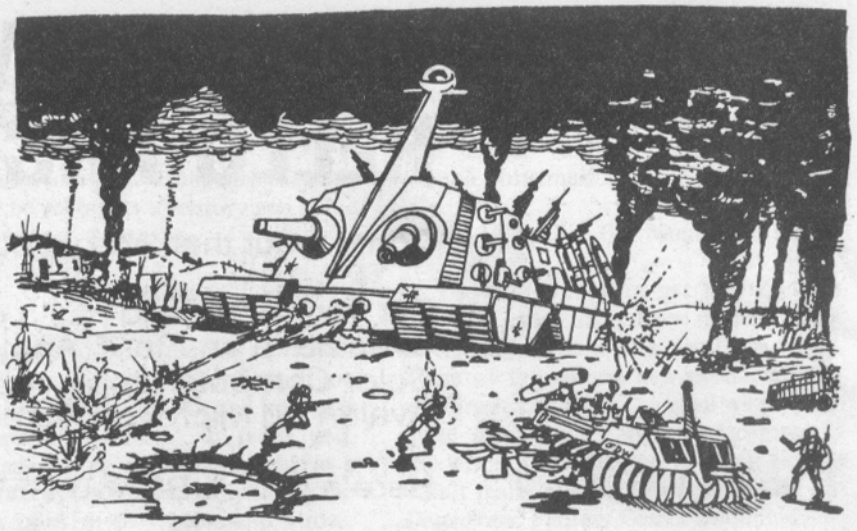
Basic Ogre Defense

by Michael Nahas



The attacking side in *Ogre* is fairly easy to learn. Not so the defense. At first, it seems as though the defenders have an impossible task; the Ogre is so heavily gunned and invulnerable that it's hard to do more than scratch it . . . while it eats your units. With practice, though, a defender can learn to make those "scratches" add up to a dead Ogre. This article, therefore, is a guide to defensive play for the beginning *Ogre* player. One of the *Ogre Book* articles covered the "four howitzer defense." This is the opposite: the "no howitzer defense."

Selection of Units

I cannot think of a more useless unit in *Ogre* than the Howitzer. Instead, I'll take two Heavy Tanks. The tanks have a combined attack factor of 8 as compared to the Howitzer's factor of 6, eight times the defense ability, and profile two separate targets for the same cost as the Howitzer.

GEVs have the advantage of great speed, at relatively small expense. Their weak point is their armor; with a defense of only 2, they're as good as gone if hit. Played right, the GEV attacks the Ogre and uses its speed to move out of the Ogre attack range. However, a force with more than 50% to 60% GEVs is too lightly armed. He won't have enough attack strength to do the job.

The Heavy Tank and the Missile Tank are of approximately the same value. The Heavy Tank has the edge in speed, defense, and firepower. The Heavy Tank's weakness is its range; it must move in so close to attack that its destruction is almost certain. The Missile Tank, on the other hand, can stay at a relatively safe distance and take pot shots at the Ogre, but its speed will not let it keep up with a healthy Ogre.

I usually take 10 GEVs, 6 Heavy Tanks, and 4 Missile Tanks in the advanced game. In the basic game, I'll take 6 GEVs, 3 Heavy Tanks, and 3 Missile Tanks. This seems to be a good force mix, with the GEVs for speed, and the tanks for firepower.

Setup

The GEVs should be positioned as far toward the top of the map as possible and not hemmed in by rubble. Spread them out so that some of them can reach the Ogre on its first turn, no matter where your opponent starts. Second in priority is the Missile Tank. Position the Missile Tanks near the middle of the map and off to the east and west edges. That leaves the Infantry and some Heavy Tanks behind the "crater line." The Infantry won't be needed until later, and the Heavy Tanks, with their great speed, will be able to catch up to engage the Ogre. As for the Command Post, put it on the far north edge in the center, so we can encourage the Ogre to come up the middle.

Battle

Ogre can be divided into three distinct tasks: hit and run, engage, and hold at all costs. The first portion of the game is where the GEVs make their hit and runs. The GEVs should target the main batteries, if you can gather enough firepower for good odds. Otherwise, fire at the secondary batteries, and any GEVs in firing range not taking part in that attack can fire on the treads.

(So why not fire on the missiles? Because they are used up when fired, which is just as good as being destroyed. Look at it this way: You move your tank in close enough to shoot at a missile, but the Ogre shoots up your tank with its batteries. That's one missile for one tank. What is the difference if the Ogre shoots at your tank with one of its missiles? The exchange is still one missile for one tank, and the tank might even survive.)

After the GEVs have made their attack, it's time for them to run . . . I call it GEV flee time. Scatter your GEVs in all directions, but keep them within range of the next anticipated location of the Ogre.

When the Ogre approaches the middle of the map, it's time for some good fighting. If you can't move your units in close enough for a first strike, make sure they are far enough away so the Ogre won't get the first strike. The first attack should still be an attempt to pull the Ogre's teeth. When the Ogre has reached the middle of the map you must start attacking the treads; this is to slow the Ogre down so your Infantry and Missile Tanks can keep up with it. You *have* been moving your Infantry up all this time, haven't you? The whole idea is to surround and attack with as many units as possible. Surrounding the Ogre is easier if the Ogre is coming up the middle of the map instead of running up one of the sides. If the Ogre player has been smart enough to save his missiles, then you will have to knock those out before the Ogre gets any closer to the CP.

Now you have a wounded Ogre limping along toward your CP. Your infantry units are charging the Ogre and are being cut down by the cybertank's antipersonnel weapons. The Ogre must be stopped; all attacks must be concentrated on the treads. You cannot afford to attack antipersonnel weapons, and the mains and most of the secondary batteries should have been knocked out by now.

I hope this will give you a good start in learning to play the defense. Maybe you could talk your opponent into some optional rules to give you a handicap. Try using this one: if a unit attacking treads is one-half or less its maximum range away from the Ogre, then boost the odds up to 2:1. This can give a beginning player quite a bit of help when that Ogre comes rolling down the pike.

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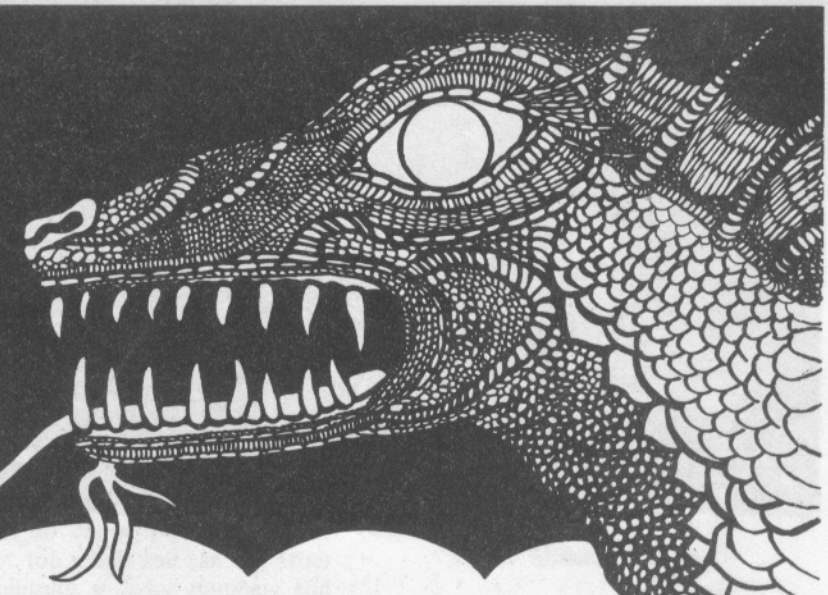

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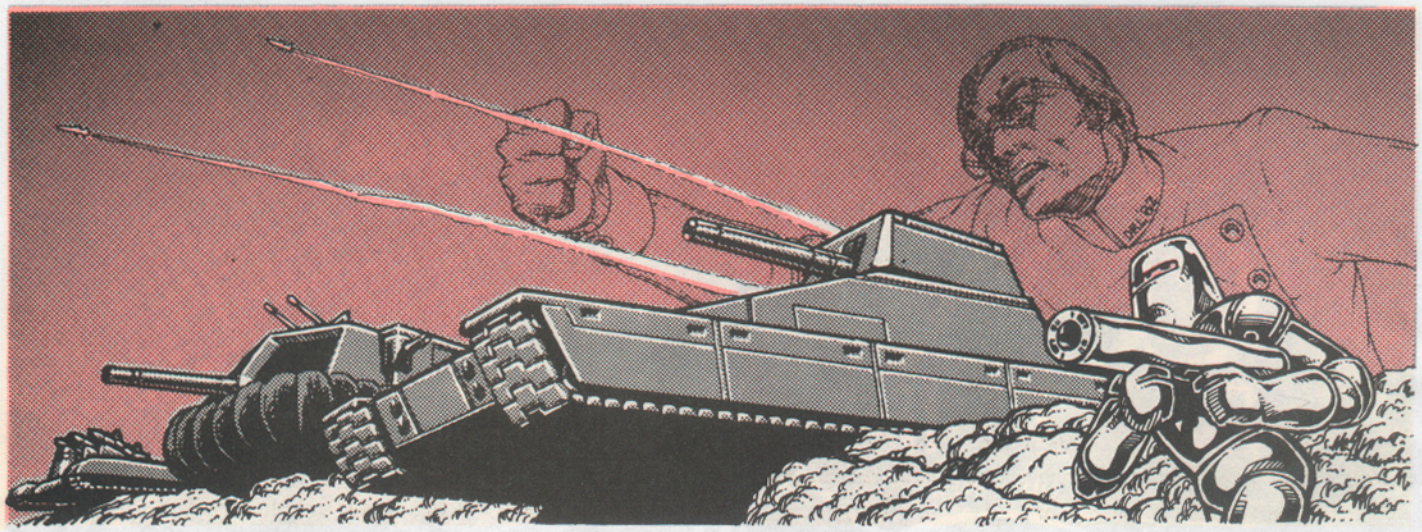


Tournament Ogre/G.E.V.

by Philip Rennert

The escape of *Ogre* and *G.E.V.* from the quagmire of litigation has gladdened the hearts of all of us long-time *Ogre/G.E.V.* fans. On this occasion, I would like to pass on some hints for better play acquired through experience in various tournaments. I hope you find them useful.

Nearly every *Ogre/G.E.V.* tournament I've played in has used the *Ceasefire Collapse* scenario, since it is clearly balanced. (I think this is a pity, since my favorite scenario is *Raid*; it's a lot of fun to knock down bridges, tear up tracks, murder civilians, and generally devastate everything in sight. Might I suggest to some tournament director out there a *Raid* tournament, balanced by having the players bid victory points for the privilege of playing their favorite sides?) Everything I say here should be taken to refer to *Ceasefire Collapse*, unless another scenario is indicated.

First, I'd like to mention two general principles which should govern strategy.

1. The business of war is the destruction of enemy troops.

In other words, forget about those CPs with the high point values and those civilians you're sworn to defend and go after enemy units. You can pick up his CPs and towns later as a prize of victory – *if* you've first destroyed his forces. In fact, you might even leave your CPs very lightly protected in order to tempt him to detach a force to attack them; this leaves you free to fall on his remaining units with your whole force. Also, don't waste shots on CPs and towns when there are enemy units within range.

2. Strive to concentrate your whole force against a portion of the enemy's.

This has been a maxim of military strategy for thousands of years, and it should be the basis of your maneuvering. Along these lines, there's a trick which can gain you a significant advantage before the first shot is fired. Ask to set up secretly and simultaneously, then start your whole force in a clump as far forward as possible along the east-west road (i.e., from 1412 to 0513 on the old edition map, from 1408 to 0404 on the new). If you're lucky, your opponent will spread his units out along his whole side of the board. You can then make a fast attack along the road (try to get the first move, if possible), and his units starting at the other end of the board will be out of the action. This may be enough of an edge to win the game. A skilled opponent may be able to withdraw his attacked wing with little loss and concentrate on his center; if he does this, your surprise attack has failed, but you still have an even battle.

These principles may be well and good, you say, but they don't help in a tactical situation. Therefore, I'd like to discuss the tactics for each kind of unit. To get a rough measure of their relative values of various kinds of units, I've drawn up the following chart. This chart gives the victory probabilities for a one-on-one duel between the indicated units in open terrain. It takes D results into account, and assumes an exchange of shots until one unit is destroyed. The numbers given are the percent chance of victory, with the favored unit indicated (e.g., if a HVY fires first in a duel with a GEV, the odds are 94% to 6% in favor of the HVY). If the units have the same attack and defense strength, the advantage lies with the first to fire, as noted on the chart.

Firing First	Firing Second: *GEV, LT*	*MSL*	*HVY*	*MHWZ*	*HWTZR*
GEV, LT	69-31 first	69-31 GEV	73-27 HVY	56-44 GEV	83-17 GEV
MSL	69-31 MSL	69-31 first	62-31 first	56-44 MSL	100-0 MSL
HVY	94-6 HVY	86-14 HVY	69-31 first	82-18 HVY	100-0 HVY
MHWZ	100-0 MHWZ	100-0 MHWZ	82-18 MHWZ	100-0 first	100-0 MHWZ
HWTZR	100-0 HWZ	100-0 HWZ	78-22 HWZ	100-0 HWZ	100-0 first

Various things can be seen from this chart. Most evident is the advantage that comes from getting off the first shot. In general, do not rush an equal force unless most of your force is close enough to be able to get off the first shot after movement. This is the main objective of the tactical maneuvering that goes on after the two sides meet in the middle of the board.

Another interesting point is the lack of pecking order among the armor units. If a MSL fires first at a HVY (and it usually will, since the attack range –movement plus range – of a MSL is 6, and that of a HVY is 5), the MSL will win 62% of the time. If a HVY duels a GEV, even if the GEV fires first, the HVY will win 73% of the time. A GEV-MSL duel is even, with advantage to whoever fires first. Therefore, there is no unit which dominates the others; this is a mark of good game design.

Now I'd like to consider the units one at a time, describing their good and bad points, making some unit choice recommendations, and giving some tactical suggestions about how to use, and oppose, them.

Heavy Tank

Good points: attack, defense strength, mobility

Bad points: range

Recommendation: Choose lots of them. A HVY's 4 attack factor gives you the best possible bang for the buck, and its high defense strength and ability to ignore woods and streams while moving 3 are also strong recommendations. I believe the best force is one made up mostly of HVYs.

What to do with yours: Put them in the forefront of your armor line (but behind your Ogre). If you have many HVYs, try to fight the decisive battle in the northern, forested part of the board, where their mobility is greater than other units'. Let them lead the armor attack.

What to do about the other guy's: There's not too much you can do, other than concentrate superior numbers and firepower (like an Ogre). Try to pick them off from outside their range, with an infantry-screened MSL or HWTZR. The only problem is that you might not be able to stay outside their range for long.

GEV

Good points: speed, double move

Bad points: attack, defense, range, sensitivity to terrain

Recommendations: GEVs are great raiders, but they're not suited for the kind of stand-up fights that occur in *Ceasefire Collapse*. Don't choose many GEVs.

What to do with yours: GEVs should stay around the edge of things, darting in to put in their two factors' worth and then running. A GEV raider coming up and retreating along the east-west road is another possibility. GEVs are the best units for mixing in on the duel of Ogres that usually precedes the armor battle, and living to tell about it. If you do take a lot of GEVs, try to keep them together. (In the *Raid* scenario, the offense should take mostly GEVs. I like to think of GEVs as killer bees: They're best in swarms.) A swarm of GEVs is good for rear area raids on MSLs and HWTZRs (as I said above, don't go after CPs).

What to do about the other guy's: Fighting the battle in the northern woods is a big help. Otherwise, HVYs are good medicine for GEVs – they can afford to give away the first shot and still usually win. Infantry is good for delaying GEVs, especially in a town or forest. I mentioned above the possibility of exposing CPs to distract enemy GEVs.

Missile Tank

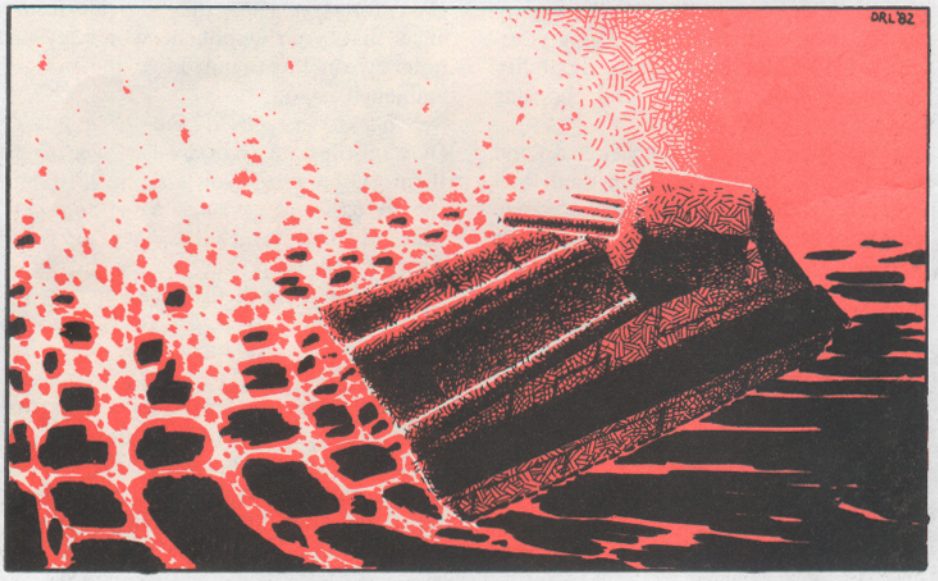
Good points: range, attack strength

Bad points: speed, defense strength, sensitivity to terrain

Recommendation: MSLs are good things to have backing up your HVYs in a battle, but their low speed and sensitivity to terrain make it difficult to get them there in time. Choose one or two, maybe, intending to keep them on the road to offset their speed disadvantage.

What to do with yours: They should be your second line. Try to keep them four hexes away from their targets, with a line of HVYs or infantry in between. The basic job of a MSL is to shoot at enemy units from outside their range, since MSLs don't last long when shot at. They're also good for finishing off a wounded Ogre, if the Ogre is hurt too badly to catch them. (In a game of ***Ogre***, my favorite defense is about half and half HVYs and MSLs.)

What to do about the other guy's: Try to get close enough to kill them,



basically. If he has a line of MSLs behind his main line, a well-placed overrun may knock a hole through which your units can get within killing range of the MSLs. Since they're slow, you may be able to maneuver the fighting away from them, or to where they have to come closer to get shots off.

Light Tank

Good points: cost, speed

Bad points: defense strength, range, sensitivity to terrain

Recommendation: LTs share with HVYs the distinction of having the best attack strength for their cost, and a pair of LTs takes two hits to kill, as opposed to one for a single HVY. Choose a pair or two.

What to do with yours: Keep them on the edges of the battle. You don't want them in the center, since you want more firepower than 2 factors/hex, and stacking in the center can be bad news, but you want them in there shooting. They're your flankers. They can be used for rear end defense against GEVs, but make sure they outnumber the GEVs in this case; a well-handled swarm of GEVs can outmaneuver and destroy an equal number of LTs.

What to do about the other guy's: The same as for HVYs. Try to hit them from outside their range. They're easier to kill than HVYs; it's just that there are more of them. A swarm of GEVs can whittle them away, but it takes awhile.

Howitzer

Good points: attack strength, range

Bad points: cost, immobility, defense strength

Recommendation: The trouble with any fixed defense is that all the enemy has to do is walk around it. Tying yourself to HWTZRs limits your flexibility too much; I don't recommend choosing any.

What to do with yours: Pick a good place to put them, then keep them well screened with infantry. Moreover, keep your mobile forces close by; there's no point in choosing a HWTZR and then going out to fight the big battle outside its umbrella. If one of your HWTZRs is being attacked, put your infantry in the hexes the attackers would like to shoot from (e.g., two hexes away, for a GEV attack), forcing them to overrun or delay while they mop up the infantry.

What to do about the other guy's: Just walk around them; stay outside their range when possible. When you do attack, there is no better target for an Ogre missile than a HWTZR. Go get 'em. In *Ogre*, a good four-howitzer defense has been published for the basic game (Ogre Mk III with two missiles), but this idea does not work for the advanced game (Ogre Mk V with six missiles); the defense can't shoot away the Ogre's missiles quickly enough to avoid getting its HWTZRs missiled. A concerted rush by GEVs or other units will also destroy a HWTZR. Remember this: Never rush a HWTZR half-heartedly. Expect to take some losses on the way in; then get a unit into killing range of the HWTZR as quickly as possible and it's all over.

Mobile Howitzer

Good points: attack strength, range

Bad points: cost, speed, defense

Recommendation: A MHWZ has the same attack strength as a HWTZR, enough range to fire unreturnable shots fairly often, and the mobility to go (slowly) where you want it, plus an extra point of defense strength. Choose at least one, maybe two.

What to do with yours: Keep them far enough back to shoot without getting shot at, and screen them with infantry as you would a HWTZR. Keep them on the road to increase their speed; a road junction like 1412 or 0513 in the old edition, or 1408 and 0404 in the new, is a good place for them, since it gives you an attack range of 8 in many directions. Unfortunately, they make good targets for Ogre missiles, so you must keep them well back (and maybe in a town) while there are missile-firing enemy Ogres active. They are good for resolving stalemates in your favor; if two lines of HVYs are facing off six hexes apart, a MHWZ in your line means he must either rush or withdraw. And if you prefer a mostly-HVY force, as I do, they provide insurance that your opponent won't try to hole up on the island, blow the bridge, and laugh at you.

What to do about the other guy's: Ogre missiles are a good way to get rid of them. Otherwise, you can rush them; they're easier to get close to without getting hit than HWTZRs. They are very slow; it may be possible to maneuver the battle away from them.

Infantry

Good points: cost (free), overrun strength, terrain defense benefits

Bad points: range, speed

Recommendation: You get them for free, and they have a number of uses. Basically, they're expendable cannon fodder, but they shouldn't be wasted. Losing your infantry probably won't lose you the battle, but using them well could win it.

What to do with yours: Towns, forests, and swamps are good places for infantry. As mentioned above, there should be an infantry screen around each HWTZR or MHWZ. There should also be some infantry guarding your towns and CPs (if they won't stop GEV raiders, they'll at least delay them, which is what you want). Most of them, however, should be at the battle, trying to get close enough to overrun something. Many players, thinking in World War II terms, don't realize how deadly a powered infantry overrun can be, but their double strength plus the fact that they're multiple targets makes them odds-on to kill anything but an Ogre in an overrun. Keep an eye out for an enemy unit ending his move within two hexes of your infantry; if you see one, get him. Infantry overruns, and the threat of them, can be the deciding factor breaking a deadlock in the battle. It is often a good idea to have a line of infantry in front of your first line of armor – they can advance, threatening overruns, and force the enemy to either withdraw or attack the infantry and open himself to a counterattack by your armor.

What to do about the other guy's: Infantry are easy to shoot from outside their range; a HWTZR, MHWZ, MSL, or GEV can do this. Alternatively, you can bring an Ogre adjacent and let its AP guns munch them. Do not overrun infantry if you can help it, and watch out for their overruns. Unsupported infantry can be whittled away without loss by long-range fire or GEV raiders, but it takes time, which you may not have. To counter an advancing infantry line, put out an infantry line of your own and let the infantry overrun each other, which usually results in an even exchange.

Ogre

Saving the best for last, we come to what the game's all about. *Ogre/G.E.V.* tournaments usually consist of battles between one Ogre and some number of armor units on each side, but there are sometimes two Ogres. I will assume that the power plant explosion rule is not being used. (I agree with this, since the rule with equal Ogres on each side usually just leads to a big bang and a game of *G.E.V.* without Ogres. However, I'd like to mention an interesting tactical situation that came up with the power plant rule in effect at Origins '80. One side had a Mk III and eight armor units, and the other a Mk IV and four. The Mk III could

win by kamikaze-ing the Mk IV and fighting eight against four if it could reach the Mk IV's hex, but the superior speed of the Mk IV prevented this. A duel ensued, with the Mk IV standing off and firing missiles and the Mk III closing in and firing guns; it ended, as the odds would indicate, with the Mk IV's missile racks gone and the Mk III having one or two guns left. The Mk III was now free to chase enemy armor and CPs, but only at the risk of having the Mk IV run around behind it and go after its armor and CPs. A tricky situation; I won't tell you how it came out, but I recommend playing it, as per the *Ceasefire Collapse* rules, as a tactical challenge. I'd be interested to hear who you think has the advantage.

Good points: everything

Bad points: I don't know. Cost, I guess.

Recommendation: As the rulebook says, the *Ceasefire Collapse* exchange rates for Ogres (8 armor units for a Mk III, 12 for a Mk IV or V) undervalue them. Choose the biggest Ogre you can; choose two, if they'll let you, even if it means having no armor. In my opinion, the Mk V is much superior to the Mk IV, and you should always choose a Mk V; this difference may be enough to win the game. The reason is that the Mk IV is too vulnerable to having its missile racks shot off, and then it doesn't have much offensive power left.

What to do with yours: Put it in front; let it lead the attack. If you have two, stack them – they're immune to spill-over fire, and it's a great concentration of firepower. It's usually a good idea to concentrate your fire on the enemy Ogre, since that represents his greatest concentration of firepower, but against this is the fact that D results only affect armor. Shooting at armor can be more effective if you're in a position to take advantage of Ds. It might be worth saving your missiles if he has a HWTZR or MHWZ; otherwise, volley them as soon as possible. If you can gain a 2-1 gun superiority on the enemy Ogre, overrun it. The overrun rules are hard on Ogres, which lose their guns in an overrun; you'll be surprised at how fast they turn to junk. Try to avoid overrunning other enemy units unless you have a reason; it's generally too expensive, except maybe when overrunning single GEVs and LTs. Putting your Ogre in a town makes it really resistant to damage. Your opponent will probably fall back to draw it out.

What to do about the other guy's: It's not easy to stop an Ogre. Shoot at it with everything you can get, concentrating on guns first (missiles racks, for a Mk IV). If you cripple it, finish it off quickly. Even without guns, it can still crunch your units undertread. The hard part, though, is getting that far. Your troops have good reason to wish they were somewhere else . . .

To summarize the strategy presented here, I envision a force starting in a clump near 1412 or 0513 (old edition; 1408 or 0404 new). It would then advance along the east-west road with an Ogre Mk V in the lead, followed closely by a line of HVYs (if speed is of the essence) or a line of infantry followed by a line of HVYs (if it isn't). This line would be backed up at the appropriate distance by a MHWZ and maybe some MSLs. On the flanks of the line, in the less wooded areas, would be LTs and possibly GEVs. Tactics, of course, will depend on what and where the opposing force is, the basic idea is to get the enemy Ogre first, and then the armor. The outcome of the battle will probably depend on the close-in maneuvers for position, and who succeeds in getting off the first shots with the majority of his force.

I would be interested in hearing your comments.

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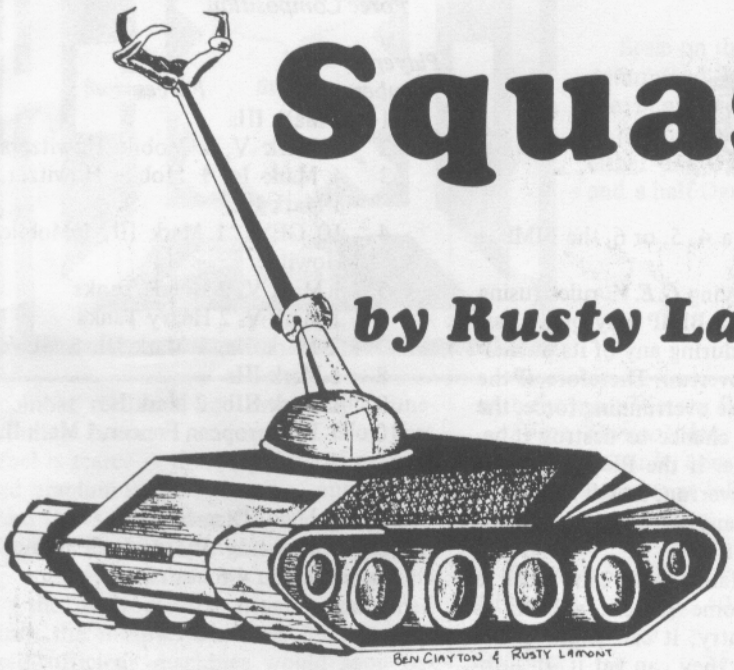
Ogre Squash

by Rusty Lamont



Ogre Squash is not a game where people wander about squashing creatures for fun, but a game of miniatures with a novel twist. Conceived and designed by John Aro and myself, ***Ogre Squash*** is an enjoyable variant of ***Ogre***. For those who are ardent, die-hard ***Ogre*** players, ***Squash*** is a healthy diversion. For those who are not boardgamers, or are not familiar with ***Ogre, Ogre Squash*** has simple rules which can be learned by a beginner in a few minutes.

Ogre Squash is played on any medium-sized floor with tape measures and clay miniatures constructed by the players.

Here's what you'll need:

1. Modeling clay – about 9 lbs for a 20-person scenario, less for others. Good modeling clay that can be used over and over is available in most art stores. Don't use Play-doh. For permanent vehicles, use self-drying or a kiln.
2. Tape measures and masking tape.
3. A scenario such as one of the two detailed herein or the ones found in ***Ogre*** and ***G.E.V.***

Putting Together Scenarios

I currently run two scenarios as an introduction to ***Ogre Squash***. The first has 20 players (10 per side) battling it out on terrain similar to a Mississippi River bottom with a bluff on one side, a deep river running down the center (criss-crossed by a road with two bridges), a lake, and a wooded area (see Diagram 1). Any terrain is useful and adds a dimension of strategy not usually found in ***Ogre***. I usually lay out the terrain using masking tape of varying sizes, colors, and widths to outline the areas, and put a big letter within the area showing what it is (i.e., "W" for woods, "B" for bluff, etc.). No matter how carefully one draws the scenario board on paper, it can't be duplicated exactly with masking tape, so don't be shy about making triangular lakes (consider the triangle to be the part of a rounded lake where an Ogre can be totally submerged), or a non-circular Devil's Tower (see Diagram 2), etc.

Modeling Figures

At the major conventions where I have run ***Ogre Squash***, there has been a prize awarded for the Best Designer (or should that be sculptor?). This adds a little fun to the actual modeling process. Of course, every player is expected to model his own vehicles (I usually supply the GEVs from a cache of hardened ones I bring along), trying to keep them fairly proportionate: Ogres should be no more than 4" long, GEVs and other vehicles should range between 1" and 1½". However, this scaling is not absolutely necessary for the play of the game, as all measurements are taken from the nearest edge to the target. Put all figures on small sheets of paper (on which one can write out the statistics) to save carpets from almost certain discoloration.

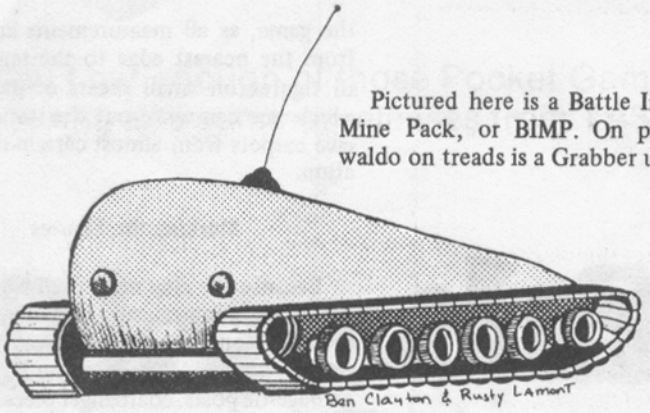
Marking the Figures

Because the clay most used is gray, the vehicles are intrinsically indistinguishable from one another. A good way to mark them is to stick flags into the backs with garbage-tie posts, coathanger pieces (which also make excellent guns) or toothpicks. Flags are made by putting peel-off mailing labels on the posts or by folding strips of masking tape onto them. On these flags can be written the name of the Ogre, its identification number, or whatever the players desire. Smaller pieces (like the BIMPs described later) can be carved with the owner's initials or permanently painted.

Playing

Now that the terrain has been laid out and the floor is riddled with clay figures, play begins much the same as in ***Ogre***, but with the following differences:

1. Change all movement and firing ranges from 1 hex to 1 foot.
2. Firing and movement must be committed to a specific target or in a specific direction before measurement takes place, and the shot or move takes place thereafter, even if it's short.
3. Anytime a section of an Ogre is hit, that section (or its probable location) may be demolished, using the fingers only. Any *totally* destroyed vehicle may be immediately "squashed" by any creative means possible.
4. All measurements regarding distance or firing are taken from the closest edge of the vehicle to the intended target.
5. Only Ogres may move into water, losing 1' movement immediately upon doing so, and 1' per turn thereafter for every turn of submerged movement. GEVs skim the surface at +1' movement/phase.
6. Any vehicle may shoot off a bluff so long as it is adjacent to the edge. Doing so allows an additional +1' range.
7. Any vehicle may shoot upwards along a bluff as long as the target is on the edge. This shot is a -1 to hit.
8. Movement onto or off a bluff may only be done through a pass. A vehicle either on or off a bluff may shoot at a target in a pass with no penalties or bonuses.
9. Underwater combat can only be accomplished with ramming and missile fire. Missiles are at full strength, but ramming attacks are at -1 die effectiveness.



Pictured here is a Battle Immobilizing Mine Pack, or BIMP. On page 11, the waldo on treads is a Grabber unit.

No machine may fire into or out of the water to hit another.

10. Woods obscure all vision and firing unless the target is ½' away or closer. Ram attacks are at full strength. Machines may fire out of the woods only at targets above (i.e., on bluffs, flying targets, etc.).

New Machines

Grabbers: These machines are workhorse machines capable of picking up any objects up to 5' in diameter. Measuring 10' x 10' (the actual vehicle, *not* the model), a Grabber climbs aboard any friendly vehicle for transport. Grabbers ride outside of most units, or inside an Ogre, and are destroyed when that machine is destroyed. They have no attack capabilities, and virtually no defense. A Grabber has a movement of 3. Terrain affects it as though it were a Missile Tank.

Any shot of higher strength than Anti-Personnel will destroy a Grabber not affixed to another vehicle; otherwise, it can only be destroyed when the transporting machine is also destroyed.

BIMPs: BIMP stands for Battle Immobilizing Mine Pack. BIMPs are mobile, treaded mines that explode beneath any target they are set after. Originally designed to busy an Ogre's attacks, trying to destroy it, they're quite effective if they make it underneath any treaded unit. A BIMP moves 3; terrain affects it as though it were a Missile Tank. Its defense is 2.

If a BIMP does make it to an Ogre's hex, it will explode, doing 3d6 tread damage. Any armor unit or CP will immediately be destroyed if the BIMP is able to explode beneath it. BIMPs cannot affect infantry unless the infantry is trying to overrun them (see below).

If you are playing *Ogre* rules (using "ramming") then a BIMP picks one target and explodes as soon as it enters an enemy hex – the enemy has no chance to destroy it once it enters the hex. If enemy units move into a BIMP hex, roll one die. On a 1, 2, or 3, the BIMP may pick a target and attack it – this happens immediately. On a 4, 5, or 6, the BIMP is destroyed.

If you are playing *G.E.V.* rules (using "overruns") then a BIMP may pick a target and explode during any of its own attack turns in an overrun. Therefore, if the BIMP is part of the overrunning force, the enemy will get a chance to destroy it befor it can explode. If the BIMP is part of the force being overrun, it will be able to explode before any of the overrunning units can attack it.

Normally, infantrymen can avoid a BIMP. If, for some reason, a BIMP is overrun by infantry, it can explode and get them before they can get it. It automatically gets one squad of the attacking infantry.

Scenario One

Description: Two teams of 10 players each, equal in composition, battle it out on variable terrain.

Victory Conditions: Battle to the death.

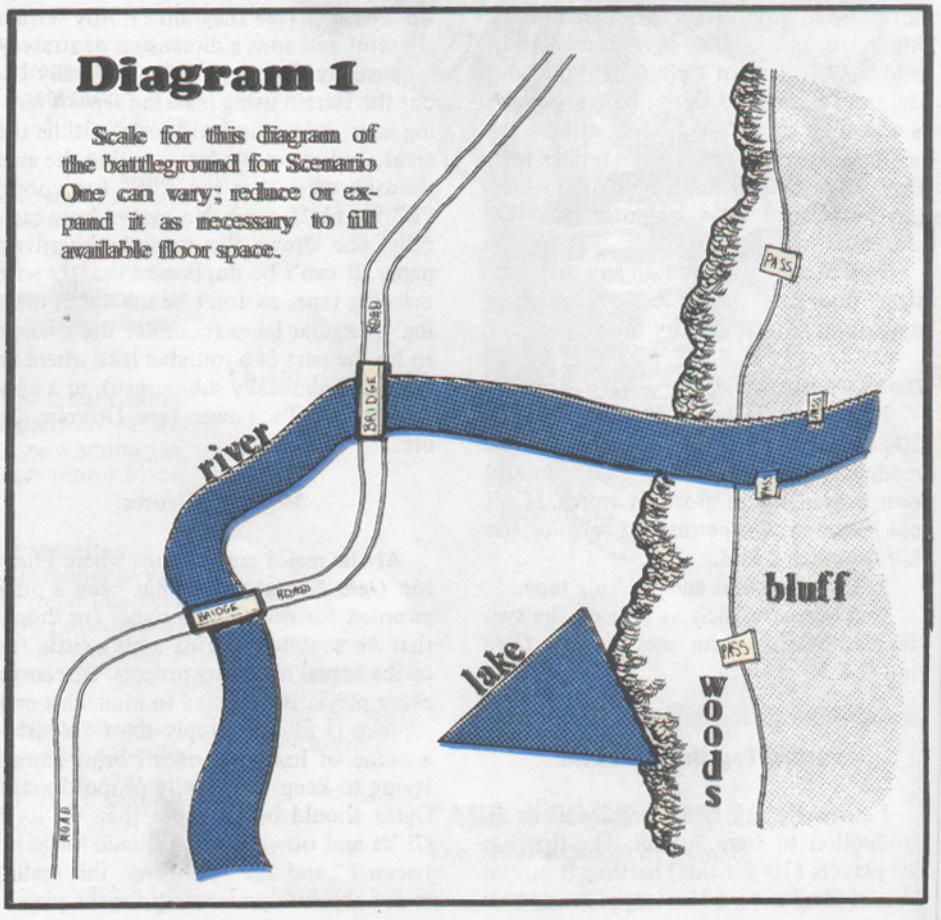
Force Composition:

Player Number	*Forces*
1	2 Mark IIIs
2	1 Mark V, 2 Mobile Howitzers
3	4 Mark Is, 1 Mobile Howitzer, 1 Mark III
4	10 GEVs, 1 Mark III, 1 Mobile Howitzer
5	1 Mark V, 2 Missile Tanks
6	1 Mark V, 2 Heavy Tanks
7	2 Mark IIs, 1 Mark III, 6 GEVs
8	6 Mark IIIs
9	1 Mark IIIb, 2 Mark Is
10	1 Paneuropean Fencer, 1 Mark II, 1 Mark I

Playing Field: Diagram 1
Turn Sequencing: By team, all at once.
Playing Time: 4-6 hours.

Scenario Two

Desperate times require desperate measures. When Ogres run low on fuel,



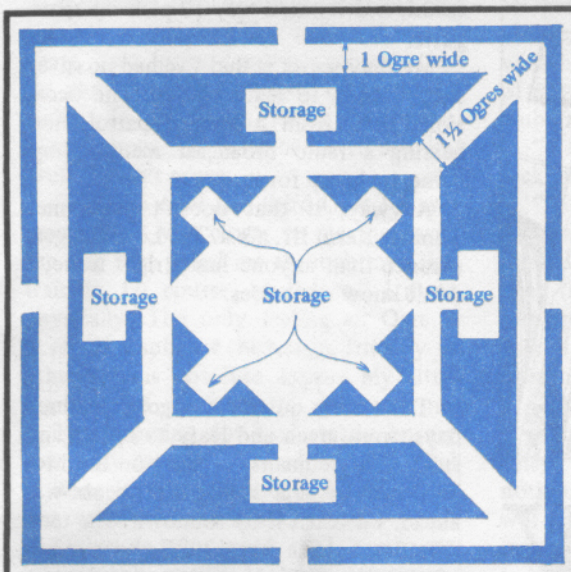


Diagram 2

Scale on this map setting is determined by the scale of the miniatures you've made; note that the hallways are either one Ogre-width or one and a half Ogre-widths across.

combat readiness and even simple functioning becomes endangered. Not that fuel is scarce – there's plenty of extracted uranium stored – but it's unprocessed, and Ogres don't have the processing capabilities. Back before the wars began, all processing was done by nuclear engineers – the methods were never programmed into the massive machines for fear that self-sufficient machines would soon become threats to the creators. At present, duels occur over packets of processed fuel and not over the petty, unsolvable squabbles of mankind. Not many machines are still operational, because only the strong survive – by cannibalizing off destroyed opponents.

In the Western sector of North America, there stands a rock formation called Devil's Tower. Inside the imposing monolith are many tunnels and chambers blasted out by Ogres for use as a base and as a storage receptacle for their sixteen nuclear packets.

In the East there are two main Ogre bases. They have formed a coalition dedicated to retrieving the nuclear packets from Devil's Tower for their own use. Both have different motives. One needs the fuel desperately for continued existance and will risk all to obtain as many packets as possible. The other has a generous supply and wishes to destroy these few packets. Neither group knows the other's plans and both will begin the attack on the premise that all fuel packets are to be split evenly between them.

Victory Conditions: Every time a successful hit on any Ogre or other machine is made, one Victory Point is awarded to that player. Every nuclear packet removed from Devil's Tower nets an offensive player five Victory Points. At the end of the game, when either the Offensive or Defensive team is eliminated, the player with the most Victory Points wins.

Force Composition: Variable, determined by player by constructing machines from a point value as follows:

Offense A (destroy packets)	35 points per player
Offense B (steal packets)	40 points per player
Defense	55 points per player

These are Construction Points, not Victory Points.

Construction Costs:

Item	*Construction Points*
GEV*	2.0
Missile Tank*	1.5
Heavy Tank*	1.5
Howitzer*	5.0
Mobile Howitzer*	6.0
Grabber	0.5
BIMP	3.0
Ogre Parts:	
Main Battery*	3.5
Secondary Battery*	2.5
10 Tread*	4.0
Missile*	4.0
Missile Rack*	6.0

*as taken from *G.E.V.* and *Ogre.*

Playing Field: Diagram 2

Turn Sequencing: At the beginning of every turn a random drawing is held for sequence so as not to identify a player's team.

Limitations on Construction: Each player is limited to 4 Ogre chassis, 12 GEVs, and 8 BIMPs at maximum. All other machines and Ogre accessories are unlimited within the allotted construction points.

Playing Time: 2-5 hours.

Play begins at Devil's Tower with the following teams:

1. Defense – protect packets.
2. Offense A – destroy packets.
3. Offense B – retrieve packets.

There are three players per team and the two Offensive teams will be unknown and indistinguishable from each other unless a player slips up and exposes himself.

Ogres and other machines are to be made in true ***Ogre Squash*** tradition with clay; sides are secretly and randomly drawn. Machines are constructed using a point system so that each member of the same team will have personalized forces.

The Defensive team will determine the location of all 16 nuclear packets and is free to move them as long as it has Grabbers.

Now that you know how it's done, try a game. Age groups range from 10 years old to adult . . .

Don't permit too many GEVs when playing. They reach their full potential in ***Ogre Squash*** and can be too effective.

For a change of pace in any game, try ***G.E.V. Stomp, Panzer Bounce, Squad Squisher,*** etc. Be on the lookout for ***Ogre Squash*** at your friendly neighborhood gaming convention.

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The Lone GEV

by Michael Stackpole

The Windy City was doing its best to live up to its name, and the night breeze coming off the lake was very cold. I could barely keep my teeth from chattering long enough to ask the computer, "Is 'Bluejays' one word or two?"

"One, Bluejays, B-L-U-E-J-A-Y-S, Bluejays," it replied, like a child in a spelling bee.

I knew instantly that that broadcast had been too long, so I forced my numbed hands to hurry and concentrated on completing my paint job. As I finished the "S," I heard, "Chi 18 to Chi control, we have an intruder," crackle through the radio setup implanted in my skull. I cursed and heaved the can of black paint at the tower, where it punctuated my graffiti with a splash.

I ran to my GEV with its Empire of Vermont insignias on the sides and the custom black paint job around the windscreens, and dropped through the hatch into my command chair. Securing the hatch, I told the machine, "Start up, Silver, it's time we Hi-Hoed out of here."

Both fans purred to life. I watched the street sink away from me as I spun Silver and headed due south. I flipped the aux screen on; Silver filled it with a tactical map of Chicago. Red dots showed the positions of the Chi GEVs homing in on me. I poured on the speed and began to leave them behind.

Silver reported a roadblock ahead. The pursuing GEVs forced me to continue on my present course, so I radioed those brave souls attempting to stop a speeding GEV with sawhorses and two-by-fours: "Move it or lose it!"

Before the men at the barricade could answer, another voice spoke. "Chi 18 to Chi control, he wrote 'Go Toronto Bluejays' on the Sears Tower!" The boys at the barricade obviously heard him, because they opened up with small-arms fire.

I didn't even slow down. My gun roared and the roadblock was smashed into flaming splinters. Before the smoke had cleared I blew through it and into the night.

Someone survived my shot to murmur, "Who was that masked GEV?" over the radio. I smiled, patted Silver's console, and plotted a course for warmer climes.

* * *

You've probably come to the conclusion that I'm mad as a hatter. If you haven't, let me fill you in on a few details that might convince you. If you don't believe someone who paints a mask on his GEV, names it Silver, and wanders into the heart of enemy territory to commit acts of wanton nonsense is utterly crackers – then *you're* nuts. Welcome to the club.

I had been trained as an Air Cushion jockey for the Empire of Vermont right after the federal collapse. I left the service when I killed my lieutenant. A fair trade, since he'd killed the rest of the crew.

Outside the few "civilized" enclaves I found, the law of the jungle had taken over. Silver was in pretty good shape and well-supplied, so I started hunting down raiders, shooting up self-styled overlords, and generally making trouble for the people who were making trouble for the underdogs. Besides, I had nothing better to do, and it was a way to pick up spare parts.

My only regret is that I've had no silver shell casings to leave behind. The occasional hail from a passing patrol, and hearing a radio broadcast mention my name, make up for it.

Anyway, if that doesn't make me, Thomas Kerin III, a.k.a. The Lone Ranger, madder than anyone has a right to be, I don't know what does.

* * *

The terrain outside had gone, in three days, from green and leafy to brown and spiky. The remnants of signs on the broken highway suggested that Phoenix was ahead. I'd reach it by sundown. The temperature outside was 120°F and reminded me that Phoenix was supposed to be deserted because of the unbelievable heat. This suited me fine.

I cruised in along I-10 and took the Thomas Road exit, figuring the name would be an omen. I was looking for a large building where I could get Silver out of the sun. On my left as I headed east, a coliseum presented itself. In the back was a ramp slanting down below ground level. I descended and parked.

The building, Veterans' Memorial, seemed unremarkable and well-preserved. Silver was parked on the east side; the only major damage was a huge hole in the west wall. Though the hole had probably been opened in some sort of seige situation, I decided to scout it just to make sure.

I set the anti-intruder devices on Silver and left him in the dark. I was armed with my Ingram and a flashlight. A loading bay door provided access to the interior of the building. I moved through the shadows like a ghost. As it happened, I was very close to becoming one.

I worked my way through the smooth concrete corridors and huge hallways. Since Phoenix had had a basketball and soccer team, there would probably be a central arena. I also assumed that if someone was in here, the most logical place for him would be the arena.

The whole place was dead quiet. Every sweep of my flashlight revealed dark details and sank other things into deep pools of shadow. Somewhere outside a coyote howled, and I could just imagine a pack of them hunting me in the concrete labyrinth here. I hurried on, wishing for the arena and a clear field of fire. A passage opened on my right and I dashed into it.

I had been right. If there was going to be something in here it would live in the arena. It did.

It was an Ogre.

It flashed two spotlights into life and a red laser targeting dot appeared on my chest. Two forward anti-personnel batteries came to bear, looking like eyes on stalks. In this case, looks could kill. "Don't move," its voice bellowed into my skull. I didn't move.

This was only the third Ogre I'd ever seen, and it was closer to me than even the one that paced me through my GEV training. Of course, by "close," I mean physically. The only feeling an Ogre is likely to inspire at this range, friendly or otherwise, is absolute terror. My little Ingram did nothing to reassure me.

The targeting dot held steady on my chest. My face felt flushed; I sensed a red glow beside the spotlights. An IR laser? The voice boomed again. "I need you."

"Why do you need me? You're an (unprintably qualified) Ogre!" My amazement echoed throught the arena.

"Hey, don't call me names. I am Tactical Recon Unit Azure." It actually sounded offended. "I need you to repair me."

In the glow from its lights I could see that it had been in some fights. The armor on one side was spalled, and there was a small crater in the front facing . . . but there was nothing obvious that would interfere with function. It was a lot better off than the second Ogre I had seen – a treadless hulk that would call out to anyone within range to finish it or die trying. For all I know, it's still sitting outside St. Louis begging to die.

"What's your problem, Azure?"

"I can't move."

As my eyes adjusted, I could see something peculiar about the left treads near the front. I started to move closer, then froze. The spotlight rotated to keep steady on my chest, but nothing else happened. I moved forward to investigate.

A length of girder, evidently part of the destroyed west wall, was lodged in the tread. On its way in, it had smashed a couple of rider wheels, but that was no big problem – the Ogre had dozens. I had been around tanks long enough to understand what had really crippled Azure. If he rode very far forward or back, the girder would peel the entire tread off. That would free the Ogre, but only at the cost of most of its speed. The beast was too smart to gnaw its paw off; it would find another way out of the trap.

"How did that happen?" I asked.

"Just lucky, I guess." That was all I ever got out of Azure about it. Whether he'd been attacked in his den and an explosion had driven the obstruction into the tread, or whether he had knocked it down himself and been victim of an unlucky bounce, he never said. Do machines have pride? Embarrassment? Azure, built to speed through enemy territory and demolish anything fast enough to catch up with him, pinned down by a tiny chunk of mindless metal . . . I would have been embarrassed, too.

"I fix it, then you blast me, right?" I kicked at the girder. It didn't budge.

"No, the markings on your jacket are not listed as those of an enemy. I would have destroyed you long ago if that had been the case." Azure tipped his gun barrels up, half as a sign of good faith, and half, I believe, as if rolling his eyes to heaven at my stupid question.

Of course, the problem with machines is that you can't tell when they're lying. They don't sweat; their voices betray nothing. Once in a while a programmer will set key words to be used when the machine lies – but if Azure had any such, I didn't know them. An intelligent machine, on the other hand, can tell as well as anyone when a human is lying. And Tactical Recon Unit Azure (I found out later) had some special abilities along that line – a multi-ton lie detector. *He* didn't have to gamble on *me;* he knew what I was feeling as soon as I did.

"I can't take this out without tools. I've got gear back in my vehicle. I'll come back." If the thing would just let me out . . . My words hung in the air. Then the voice, seeming somehow subdued, replied, "All right. Go ahead."

I walked back across the arena, jogged through the first tunnels, ran through the next ones. By the time I got to Silver I was winded. If I kept the bulk of the arena behind me, I should be safely away in no time.

But standing there beside Silver, I began to have second thoughts. The great machine hadn't attacked me, it had asked for help. That didn't mean much, maybe; it had to have outside assistance, and a dead man couldn't pull that girder out. But it could have blasted me when I said I couldn't do it. Instead it had let me go back "to get tools."

It had trusted me.

Or had it? I remembered the way its voice had lowered when it told me to go. Maybe it hadn't really expected me to return, once I was out of gun range. But it had let me go anyway. It had nothing to lose by releasing me, nothing to gain by killing me. A creature of flesh and blood might have blasted me in frustration. But the Ogre had let me go.

I shook my head. It was crazy, insane, stupid. The machine would kill me. I deserved to die for being an idiot. But I had given my word.

I went back to the cargo compartment for the block and tackle gear. The walk back to the arena was the longest trip I've ever taken.

* * *

An hour later, the girder came free with a horrible grinding squeak. The Ogre rolled back and forth a few feet. "Satisfactory," the voice boomed.

"Right," I replied. "Now you can't kill me."

Azure hummed. "Explain."

"Remember the story of the boy who pulled the thorn from the lion's paw? The lion became his friend for life."

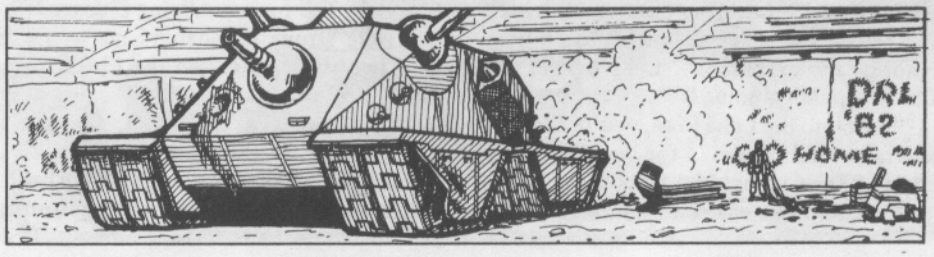
The machine hummed again. "My programming included a complete literature survey. I recall the story. How shall I know you?"

A giddy feeling of relief filled me. "Call me Thom . . . er, the Lone Ranger." I laughed and backed off as his engines came to life again. He said nothing further as he backed out of the arena, shredding what little of the artificial turf had survived his entry.

Once Azure left, I retraced my steps to Silver, climbed in, and told him to wake me 15 minutes before dawn.

Silver woke me on time by drilling into my brain an annoying buzz that had been very effective in the past. I skipped breakfast and left the coliseum as quickly as possible, getting back on Thomas Road, heading east to Central. I went north on Central to a road called Indian School and headed east on it. The map indicated it had curves and a canal running alongside it, making it a more interesting drive than Thomas.

As I hit 62nd Street, Silver crackled, "Incoming missile." The built-up bank of the canal on my left, and a low wall from some housing developments on my right gave me no room to turn and evade. Cursing the Ogre, whose missile rack had been intact, I pulled an old move I had used before to duck missiles. I cut *all* power to fans.



Silver dropped with a shrill scream of metal and a bone-jarring crunch. My seatbelt dug into me as it kept me from flying out through the mask. Then the missile demolished the roadway 100 meters in front of me. The shockwave rocked Silver and me, but did no real damage.

Instantly the radio was alive with chatter. "Chi 4 to Chi 1: Butch, I think the Cub got him."

My mind stopped and backed up. The attack had not been by Azure after all. The boys from Chicago had followed me all the way to Phoenix! In the dead city, I was easy to pick out. I was surprised they had followed me so far, but their nicknaming a unit the Cub and their dogged pursuit indicated that they had indeed taken umbrage at what I'd done to the Sears Tower. The Cubs had made it into the last World Series, the one the Collapse ended. They were beating the Bluejays 3-2 in the series, but the series was never finished on account of revolution. Chicago didn't win and had been sore about it ever since.

"Chi 1 to Chi 5 and 6: Tinker, Evers, can you see him?" A feral grin swept over my face as I realized they had stationed GEVs at both ends of this snakelike section of Indian School. I powered up and drove into the cloud of dust . . . toward the two red dots burning on Silver's map of Phoenix.

Even as Tinker began to frame his answer, Silver broke from the shattered section of road. I shot past their position by swinging to the left and blowing along the bank of the canal. Their gunners tore divots from the bank behind me but never came close. Once I was beyond them I moved to the road, pulled the back fan to half power and powered the front fan into a neat bootlegger turn in the middle of the street.

As Silver spun I trained my gun on Chi 6. Evers never had a chance; I blasted him in the poorly-armored aft section of the hovercraft. As it blossomed into flame, Tinker goosed his GEV forward into the smashed street in an attempt to elude me in the dust and smoke. I missed him. But his buddies, Chi 3 and 4, were coming up fast.

"Chi 1, we have movement on our scanners. He's ours! Fire!"

"No, don't, it's me –" Tinker's radio crackled and died.

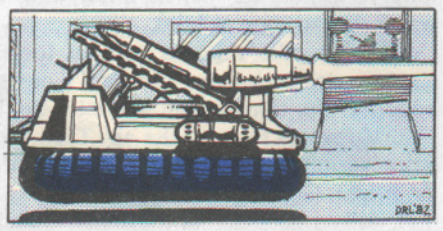
I turned Silver, repowering the back fan, and headed south on 68th Street, ignoring the speed limit. "Lone Ranger to Chi 1. Butch, go home."

"Butch to the Lone Fool, you're dead," the radio said to me. In the background I heard, "The Cub has him tracked."

I quickly cut east on Osborn for two blocks and then cut north on 70th street. The missile screamed over my head and sowed a garden of flames behind me. What was firing those missiles at me? "Ball Two," I chirped into the radio.

I turned and headed back south. Whatever the Chicago missile-thrower was, it had the range on me; my only chance was to double back and take it out before it could lob in a beanball. All the red dots on Silver's map were performing like GEVs, which didn't make much sense.

I pulled into the shadow of an enormous semi which was jackknifed across 70th, then waited. It had been a military transport; the armored body would make good cover if they still had me tracked. Apparently they didn't. Chi 3 and 4 blew past me, escorting the "Cub." I'd seen some strange pieces of hardware, but the Cub was something new. Some sort of missile launcher had been mated to the body of an air-cushion vehicle. It was bigger than the Chicago GEVs, and looked topheavy – but it had kept up with them and me all the way from Chicago. I pulled the trigger, picking what looked like a



soft spot in the midbody. It wasn't; the Cub slewed around but didn't fireball.

I hightailed it west, Chicago curses ringing in my ears. Chi 3 and 4 were slow to sort it out, but the Cub lobbed another missile at me. It demolished a service station, too close for comfort. Fragments peppered Silver. One of them must have hit an antenna, because my map started blinking erratically.

"What happened?" The Chicago team was forgetting radio procedure. "He hit the Cub, but it's all right. Tracking him again. *What the . . .*"

The dull roar that cut off the broadcast was unlike the sound of the earlier Cub missiles. And my map was getting worse. I could have sworn that it showed two missiles coming from *ahead* of me to take out the Cub. The picture cleared for a second, letting me count dots. Two, four . . . so *something* had happened to the Cub. The four remaining Chicago hovers were strung out behind me – a pair and two singles. I keyed the Chicago frequency again.

"Butch, that's three out, two on a double play. Give up?"

I swear he cursed and said, "Play ball!" That was fine with me; it was my turn to hit. I blew Silver west through some backyards and came to rest behind a house. The garage was not attached and the space between the house and garage gave me a perfect view of 68th Street. As I expected, Chi 3 and 4 were speeding towards my last-known position.

I aimed my first shot low, exploding it beneath Chi 3's front fan. It reared up and Chi 4, travelling too fast and close to dodge, clipped it in the tail end. Chi 3 flipped and came down in its roof while Chi 4 spun out of control into a brick house on the west side of the street. Both GEVs exploded, spraying metal and fire all over the street. I considered it a double and gave Chi 4 an error on the play.

Chi 2 was a single. The pilot was good, but he was too used to working with wingmen. Because of the circumstances a bit beyond my control, I was used to working alone and I'd developed all sorts of unorthodox tactics. We began circling in a deserted parking lot, our turning radii keeping us just out of the other's sights.

I killed power to my back fan. My tail end dragged and pulled me in a tighter circle. His gunner fired and missed while he cruised right into my fire.

I tried to restart my back fan. No go. The hard landing must have damaged it. I popped the hatch and climbed out to check it. Then I heard Chi 1. He came screaming round the corner, Chicago insignia glittering in the morning sun. For some reason, he didn't fire – yet. The GEV cut power and settled to the cracked cement fifty yards away.

His exterior speaker came to life. "This is your Mudville, Casey!" His AP weapons focused on me; he'd want to take Silver intact. Briefly, I regretted not dodging behind my trusty steed and making Butch do it the hard way.

But we had both overlooked something. "Look out behind you!" I yelled, almost without thinking.

"You expect me to fall for that old trick?" Butch scoffed. "Good-bye, Lone Fool."

Azure blew all the insolence out of him with a single shot. The shockwave threw me back against Silver; a fragment pinged off the armor. In response, I heard the rear fan hum to life. The next thing I knew, I was in the cockpit facing Azure. "Showdown?"

The mechanical voice replied, "Is it?"

" 'Twould be a pity. We work well together."

"True. This could be the start of a beautiful friendship."

I laughed. "Let's go. But you'll need a new ID. How do you like Tonto?"

"Plenty fine, kemo sabe, plenty fine."

We headed off across the desert.

The Ninja and The Cub

The background and setting of "The Lone GEV" are different from those of the *Ogre* and *G.E.V.* games. It's years later; governments are fragmented, whole regions of once habitable land are deserted. A ragged, semi-feudal system extends across much of North America; the no-man's-lands between controlled territories are rife with bandits and outcasts – not to mention lunatics like Thomas Kerin III.

And, as ever, technology follows necessity. In the last few years before the Collapse, it became evident to military leaders that an Ogre was only useful when it could get close enough to destroy its objective. Of course, "close enough" could be kilometers away – but when electronic surveillance picks up the machine at thirty klicks, and defensive units stop it dead fifteen klicks off, something is lacking.

What was needed was a faster, sneakier machine – more maneuverable, less detectable. Thus was created the "Stealth Ogre," also known as –

The Combine "Ninja"

The Ninja is the size of the venerable Mark III but equivalent in cost, power, and usefulness to a Mark V. It's the fastest of the Combine cybertanks, with a movement of 4. Offensive armament has been traded off for speed, intelligence, and defensive electronics and weaponry. The record sheet looks like this:

2 Missiles (6/5; D3) 0 0
1 Missile Rack (D4) 0
4 Missiles (internal) (6/5) 0 0 0 0
1 Main Battery (4/3; D4) 0
2 Secondary Battery (3/2; D3) 0 0
8 Antipersonnel (1/1 vs. infantry or CP only; D1) 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
40 Tread Units
00000 00000 (Mvmt drops to M3)
00000 00000 (Mvmt drops to M2)
00000 00000 (Mvmt drops to M1)
00000 00000 (Mvmt drops to M0)

In addition, the Ninja is loaded with ECM, ECCM, etc. It can baffle surveillance equipment until it's uncomfortably close, jam weapon guidance systems, and shoot down incoming projectiles. Subtract 1 from the die roll of *any* attack made against the Ninja except for infantry overruns.

As a limiting factor, always use *G.E.V.* overrun rules. This should apply even when you're playing strict *Ogre* scenarios.

The Ninja can be used in place of a Mk V in appropriate scenarios.

The Cub

The other unit mentioned in the story, the Chi Cub, wasn't the result of long-range tactical planning, but of quick-and-dirty ingenuity and experimentation. It's a custom-built unit combining most of the speed of a GEV with the offensive punch of a Missile Tank – in theory, at least. Its particulars:

Movement: 3/2 – that is, three hexes the first phase, two the second. It's bulkier and less streamlined than a regular GEV, so it can't move quite as fast.

Terrain Reaction: Since it's an air-cushion vehicle, treat it as a GEV for all purposes when figuring terrain effects.

Defense: D2, the same as a GEV.

Attack: 3/4, same as for a Missile Tank.

Cost: In a game of *Ogre* or *G.E.V.*, a Cub unit would cost two armor units – the same as a howitzer or MHWZ. Furthermore, neither player should be allowed to take more than a couple of these units. By their nature, they would not be available in large numbers.

Variant Rule: A unit like this could be considered a *real* jury-rig, made by combining two damaged vehicles. Cost would be only 1½ armor units instead of 2 – but any D result counts as an X. The unit is not really destroyed, but it's out of action for longer than the battle would take.

Variant 2: Instead of a missile tank system, mount a heavy tank gun on a GEV chassis to produce a 4/2, D2, M3/2 weapon – same costs.

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Me and the Festival

by W. G. Armintrout

I picked up the newspaper and there it was, right next to the obituaries. I read:

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS FESTIVAL
The Tooele Gamers Association will be holding its annual Dungeons & Dragons Festival March 9 through April 6. Several dungeons will be running on Tuesday and Friday evenings, both in Tooele and Grantsville.

Adults and high school students are welcome, both as players and dungeon masters. For more information call 882-7840 or 884-6021.

I was rather proud of that article. After all, I had typed out its every word and paragraph, and for once in its life, the local paper hadn't left out important words or game titles. Some parts did make me a little nervous – the "festival" would probably mean five people in my living room – but I thought I might drum up a new player or two for our group.

A few years back I had found myself stranded in the dry and desolate desert of Western Utah in a place called Tooele (that's pronounced too-ILL-uh), far from my beloved San Francisco, dodging clouds of nerve gas and designing automated control systems for the Army. It was a desperate predicament – I was the only gamer, so far as I knew, from one horizon to the other.

I immediately embarked upon a program that I was sure would bring me in touch with the other game players that had to exist in my new locale. I ran want ads in the local newspaper. I placed notices on every bulletin board in every game shop in Salt Lake City, a hour's drive away. I showed games to friends, neighbors, acquaintances, and fellow working men. After enthusiastic endeavor I had gathered a grand total of three people: myself, my cousin, and a third fellow addicted to wearing cowboy hats indoors.

This did not satisfy me. My college days had accustomed me to gamemastering hordes of twelve players in dungeon parties. I could whistle up four players for ***Stellar Conquest*** in ten minutes. A mere two players and a dungeon master made for a pretty anemic experience. Besides, no one would play ***Squad Leader*** with me. So I embarked on the second stage of my recruitment drive.

It took only the stroke of a pen to bring the Tooele Gamers Association into existence, with myself as president. My thinking? Well, now that the three of us were an "organization" we could qualify for coverage in the local paper under community affairs, just like the Senior Citizens, Good Sam Club, Tole Painting classes and the girls of the Junior Baptist Women's Society. I rushed down to the newspaper office with my very first press release.

In a very short time, I learned a few classic lessons about dealing with a newspaper. First: Unless you write the article out yourself, the paper will manage to garble it. One time I listed five sample types of games, only to have the news people delete out unfamiliar names like ***Imperium*** and ***Third Reich*** and announce that we would be playing ***Monopoly*** and ***Risk***. Second: Newspapers are unpredictable. One week they'll run your material on page two next to the wedding announcements (it's a *small* newspaper), and the next week you'll be on page six between city council minutes and an advertisement for Massey-Ferguson farm equipment. Since the impact of an announcement depends on what part of the paper it is put in, the effect of an article is controlled by how the editor feels at the moment when he is laying out the issue.

I ran a whole series of articles, trying every angle I could come up with. I announced our meeting times, listed different types of games, set up tournaments, changed meeting times, and opened up a special D&D-only session. But at the end of all that effort, there were four gamers in my valley: myself, my cousin, the son of a new preacher in town (a dungeon master!), and an overgrown redneck. And we had lost one member when the cowboy got married and no longer could find time for leisure activities.

I was ready to throw in the towel. Perhaps there *were* no more gamers from horizon to horizon. Perhaps I would never

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again GM another crowd in medieval melee, or never gather together the legendary seven players required for ***A Mighty Fortress.*** Perhaps I would go to my grave unfulfilled as a gamer.

It was the preacher's son, bubbling over with the enthusiasm of a habitual optimist, who spurred me on for one last try. This time, I was determined to give it my best shot.

Two ideas floated new-born into my mind:

(1) I had to come up with a catching lead, a hook that would make people want to pick up that phone and give it a dial. The subject seemed obvious – ***Dungeons & Dragons.*** While it was not my favorite game, it had one thing going for it. It was the most-played of all adventure games.

(2) I had to do something about the headlines. The newspaper people were committing us to boredom with such mundane headlines as "TOOELE GAMERS TO MEET." This time I would write my own headline on my material and hope that they would use it.

Putting both ideas together, I figured I wanted to get the magic words "Dungeons & Dragons" into a headline. Thus was born the headline: "DUNGEONS & DRAGONS FESTIVAL." Sure, there were only a few of us meeting together in my living room, but that was "festive" enough, wasn't it?

That was how the article about the D&D Festival appeared in our local paper just to the left of the obituaries.

To my considerable amazement, my phone rang off the hook! A South Carolina refugee, mother of nine children, said that she and her husband were old D&D hands. A fellow called to say he had been looking for gamers ever since he got back from Germany, but he had thought Utah was devoid of dungeon masters. A whole crowd of people surfaced way out in remote god-forsaken Dugway – three DMs and a score of dungeon delvers! And there were calls from inquisitive eight-year-olds looking for playmates.

Today the Tooele Gamers Association is one of the largest game clubs in the state, ouside of college towns like Salt Lake City and Provo. The "festival," originally conceived as five people in my home, is now an annual event growing towards minor convention status with a tournament and demonstrations of many of the less-familiar role-playing games. The TGA is my source for playtesters when I come up with a new game design, and they are the test bed for the capsule reviews I do for TSG. There is even another ***Squad Leader*** fan.

What got us started?

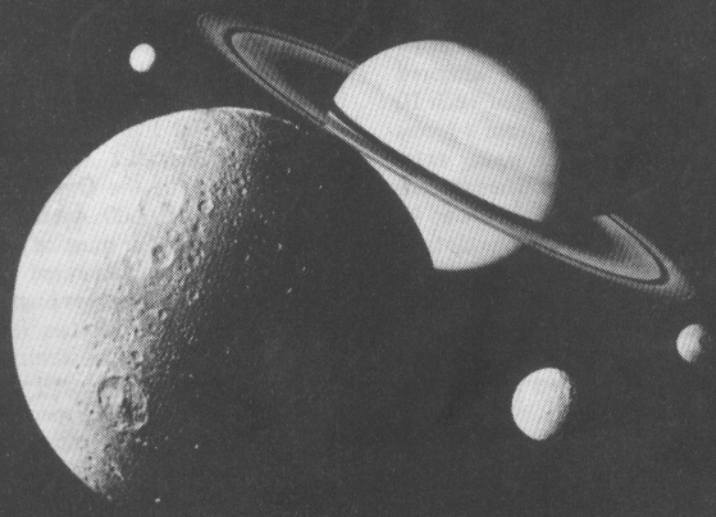
(1) *We had an organization.* It didn't matter that there were only three of us. Being an "organization" qualified us for community affairs coverage on radio, television, and in the newspapers.

(2) *We focused on D&D.* When looking for new gamers, use D&D as your drawing point. It doesn't matter if you'd rather be playing ***Firefight*** or ***Invasion: Earth*** – you have to get bodies before you can play *anything.* Later, you can persuade the other fellows to try something different (on the night the regular dungeon master comes down with the flu, for instance).

(3) *We wrote our own press releases.* Writing and typing them ourselves kept the newspeople from garbling them too badly. But the key was writing our own headlines – buzz words like "Dungeons & Dragons," "Science Fiction," and "Wargaming" will sell once you get them on top of the article. They sure beat things like "Gamers to Meet"!

If a gaming club could grow way out here in the Utah desert, then I feel confident in saying that anyone can get players together following the guidelines I've given. I never again want to read in some book or magazine that most gamers end up playing solitaire because they can't find opponents – the secret is to make good use of the media to pull together a gaming group. Advertise!

UNIVERSE III



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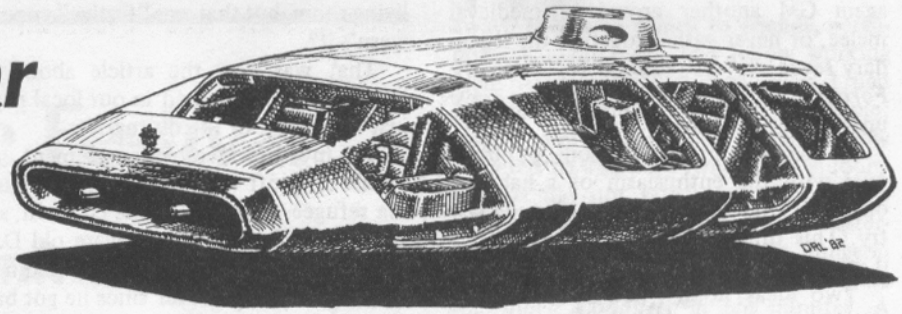
The Omni-Car

by William A. Barton



This article, originally written for the "Tools for Terrorists" article from TSG 49, involves spy-cars in ***Traveller*** terms. It was inspired by several James Bond movies and by ***Car Wars***. Here we have the Omni-Car, a Tech-10 wheeled ground vehicle – with surprises.

It appears to be an ordinary ground car and comes in a number of models: sedan, sports car, etc. The Omni-Car is also capable of operation in the air and underwater. On land, the vehicle is treated as any other ground car, except that it can travel at speeds of up to 250 km an hour on good roads. An optional trunk rocket booster can help it achieve speeds of 500 km for two periods of 30 seconds each; a ground vehicle mishap roll must be made each time it's employed, +4DM if used on any terrain but good road. Range before refueling is the same as for the ATV. Ground vehicle skill is required for use in the land mode, though Jack-O-Trades may be substituted (and nearly everyone can drive it to *some* degree).

The car is also equipped with two anti-grav modules similar to those in the air/raft, which can lift the car and carry it through the air at speeds of up to 90 km an hour. Air/raft or Grav Vehicles skill is required to use the car is this mode, though Jack-O-Trades may be substituted here. Anyone may make short hops, but a roll of 8+ must be made to avoid damage to the vehicle when landing without any skill.

To enter the water mode, the Omni-Car must be driven or flown into a body of water. The interior of the car is airtight and pressurized for dives of up to 500m below the surface. Air is recycled and will last as long as the plant is operating. Once in the water, the wheels retract and all external compartments seal, and a stern propellor and rudders extend from below the trunk compartment. Underwater, speeds of 35 km/hour are obtainable; range is the same as for the land mode.

In addition to the normal controls, the Omni-Car contains a radar and sonar scope, a tracking scope for tracer devices and a multi-band long-range communicator/scrambler. Forward, the vehicle mounts a pair of linked LMGs concealed behind the parking lights (2,500 rounds each) and two mini-missile/torpedoes in launchers disguised as bumper adornments (radar-controlled or heat-seeking, CR 1000 each, treat as tac missiles doing 8d damage). A length of chrome running down the center of the hood to the hood ornament is actually the tube for a laser; the hood ornament is the sight and a target scope is mounted in the dash above the steering wheel. Treat the laser as a laser rifle +5 to hit. It will operate as long as the power plant is undamaged and fueled, though each firing reduces the range of the vehicle by 10 km. Standard features rearward include a smoke generator which may be converted to a laser aerosol at CR 1000 extra, and which may also generate various forms of gas, an oil slick ejector (4 uses per fill), and a drop compartment, which may be filled with spikes (CR 1000 refill) or mines (CR 100 each, compartment holds five – treat as a Tech 9 hand grenade, exploding when run over). The hubcaps of the wheels are extendable blades capable of cutting through most tire materials, reaching to a range of one meter.

All windows, windshields, lights, etc., are made of bulletproof glass equivalent to battledress. The body of the car is armored to the equivalent of battledress-3 (three levels better protection than battledress). In addition, a special armored plate, equivalent to two layers of Tech 10 AFV armor, can be raised from a recess behind the rear windshield, giving extra protection to the occupants. Tires are self-sealing to avoid blow-outs and have an inner core of solid rubber. Treat as cloth-2.

Internal protection includes retractable glass partitions (bulletproof) which can be raised to isolate the back seat from the front and the driver from the passenger seat. Any of the partitioned areas can be flooded with knock-out gas by the driver. All seats in the Omni-Car are ejection seats which are independently controlled by the occupant or the driver, who has an override control. The driver's seat, when ejected, converts into an auto-gyro (see ***Sorag*** for details) for which Rotary-winged Aircraft skill or J-O-T is needed.

A special electronic key is needed to unlock the doors and trunk of the Omni-Car, as well as to trigger the ignition. If the correct key is not inserted, or if a special code known only to the keyholder is not tapped in first, the person inserting the key will receive a shock similar to that delivered by the Taser. Forced entry into the locked car in an attempt to bypass the locks will send a charge through the entire body of the car (this charge can be activated by the driver from the inside, too). Locking up the car automatically sets up the shock-trap.

Options to the Omni-Car include the aforementioned rocket booster (CR 2000, CR 1000 per refill); a trunk flamethrower which may be installed if the rocket booster is omitted (CR 2000, good for ten shots CR 200 per reload); a taillight-mounted liquid ejector capable of shooting a pressurized stream of water, paint, or other liquid up to 30m for 10 seconds (CR 800, good for two shots); anti-personnel mine strips disguised as side chrome (five to a side, CR 200 each, treat as LAG flechette round for range purposes and RAM flechette round for armor DMs and damage; use the group hits for shotguns rule at all ranges except close); an active/passive IR system (CR 2500); and external sound system/speakers for creating sirens, other vehicle sounds, miscellaneous noises, and amplified vocals (CR 3000). A mini-computer may also be installed as an option, and the driver's compartment may be psionically shielded for five times the cost of a psionic shield helmet.

Base price for the Omni-Car (minus options) is CR 450,000. Average weight is 3 tons. The Omni-Car must be specifically ordered. It is manufactured by Ahab Transport, Ltd., which has branch offices on most subsector capitals throughout known space and manufacturing plants on many TL 10+ law level 1 worlds (8+ for a plant to be on any specific world). There is a six-month waiting period on any order, plus shipping time. Government agencies may be able to secure them quicker, and terrorists often obtain them by hijacking shipments. Omni-Cars are generally only used by groups or organizations whose scope of operations is restricted to one particular world.

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Deus Ex Machina

Die-Rolling Made Easy

by D. R. Gilman

Computer die-rolling programs are fairly common; it is even possible to purchase gadgets especially built to "roll dice" electronically.

This article will describe a program that goes a step beyond similar programs, in that it allows the players to roll any number of dice with any number of "sides" – including "imaginary dice." If you need to roll a 17-sided die, this program will do it. In reality, of course, it is simply generating random numbers from one to x, where x is any number you specify – the upper limit is higher than you are ever likely to reach! Furthermore, it works on a hand-held calculator, making it very convenient for any game session.

This program was written on the Hewlett Packard 41 programmable calculator/computer. It may be adapted, with a minimum of trouble, to other Hewlett Packard machines. The algorithm is adaptable to any computing machine. Possible candidates include Casio, Sharp, and Texas Instruments.

A unique feature of this program is the bookkeeping functions it performs. After selection of the dice type you wish to have rolled, the machine keeps a running total of the sum and reminds you of the dice type you selected. In addition, there are two user-selected keys that will either restart the dice rolling sequence (using the same dice type previously selected) or will reset the machine back to its normal status.

For use on the HP-41, the user may assign the program to a key of his choice (using the ASN function). This key should be different than the two "housekeeping" keys mentioned above. The "housekeeping" keys are determined on lines 39 and 44. The label choices are from A-J and from a-e. I personally assign the program to the "E" key, the first "housekeeping" key (reset of the rolling sequence) to the "e" key, and the second (calculator reset to normal) to the "d" key.

It should be noted that this program (on the HP-41) will alter some of the normal display features. The reasoning is this: decimal points take up too much space on the screen, as do commas when recording very large sums. This is accomplished through clearing Flag 29 and setting the display for no decimal places.

Program

```
01 • LBL "DICE"      26   FS? Ø1
02   FIX Ø           27   GTO Ø1
03   CF 29           28   CLA
04   "DICE TYPE?"    29   1
05   PROMPT          30   ST+ Ø2
06   STO Ø3          31   ARCL Ø3
07   XEQ e           32   "├d"
08 • LBL Ø1          33   ARCL Ø3
09   RCL ØØ          34   "├   Σ="
10   9821            35   ARCL Ø1
11   *               36   AVIEW
12   .211327         37   CLA
13   +               38   GTO Ø1
14   FRC             39 • LBL e
15   STO ØØ          40   Ø
16   RCL Ø3          41   STO Ø1
17   *               42   STO Ø2
18   1               43   GTO Ø1
19   +               44 • LBL d
20   INT             45   SF 29
21   ST+ Ø1          46   FIX 2
22   "    "          47   CLST
23   "├"             48   CLA
24   ARCL X          49   CLRG
25   AVIEW           50   END
```

Run of "Dice"

```
      6
1d8  Σ=6
      1
2d8  Σ=7
      3
3d8  Σ=1Ø
      5
4d8  Σ=15
      2
5d8  Σ=17
      6
6d8  Σ=23
      5
7d8  Σ=28
      1
8d8  Σ=29
      4
9d8  Σ=33
      1
10d8 Σ=34
      4
11d8 Σ=38
      8
12d8 Σ=46
      4
13d8 Σ=5Ø
```

Below is an example of the dice run after the "reset" option has been hit.

```
      3
1d8  Σ=3
      3
2d8  Σ=6
      3
3d8  Σ=9
      7
4d8  Σ=16
```

Program Commentary

Line Nos.	*Purpose*
01-03	Initialization of the display, no decimals or commas
04-06	Input of dice type to be rolled, Range: 1-9.9 E99
07	Access to subroutine for initialization of memory
08-15	Pseudo random number generation algorithm; see Note I
16-21	Modification of generated number to proper range
22-25	Display of generated number
26,27	Checks for No Summation Option; see Note II
28-37	Clears display, shows number of selected type rolled, and summation of dice rolled in current sequence.
38	Returns to Label 01 for next die roll
39	User's choice of key assignment; shows choice "e"
40-42	Initialization of Registers 01 (summation of dice rolled in current sequence) and 02 (counter of number of dice rolled in current sequence)
43	Returns to Label 01 for start of new sequence
44	User's choice of key assignment; shows choice "d"
45-49	Returns machine to normal operational mode
50	End of program

Notes

I. This algorithm uses the value stored in Register 00 as a seed value, and is also the heart and basis for any other program that may require random number generation.

II. If the user wishes only to see a set of random numbers without a running total, he may set Flag 01. This will cause the machine to skip the summation section and display only a sequence of random numbers based on the die type selected. This saves very little time (if any).

The entire program is very quick and can take the hassle out of either rolling large numbers of hit dice, or a game which requires a large number of rolls on a continuous basis.

If the players have access to a Hewlett Packard printer (82143A) they may print the output with no modifications to the program. Set the printer to "MAN" mode and let it run.

StarMaster

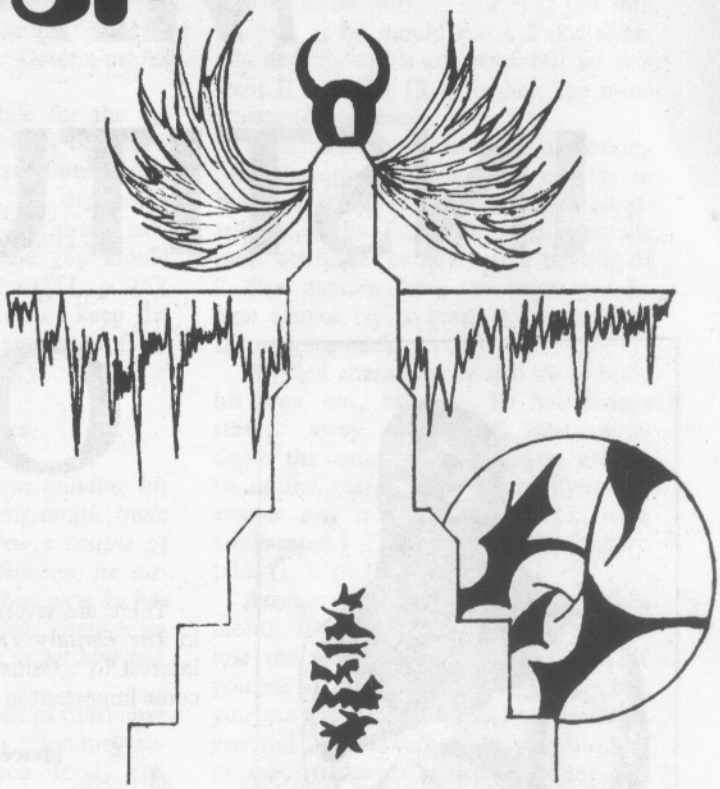
Air screams around your ships as they enter the atmosphere. Missile-launchers fire deafeningly to port and starboard while atmosphere-fighters drop in shrieking dives from their hangers below. Warriors, tightly clenching their weapons, check their pressure suits one last time and climb in grim silence into their landing shuttles. In the distance five more heavy cruisers of your empire are firing and unloading their cargo, their hulls gleaming crimson in the light of the red sun above.

This is not a drill. Already laser and missile fire from the mile-wide guardian fortresses below have turned the sky into an exploding nightmare of smoke, fire, and fragmented metal. Planes and shuttles twist and dodge down towards a landscape rapidly becoming an inferno of flame and radiation.

This is no mere raid. For years your people had explored nearby systems without violence, trading technology to the primitive civilizations there in exchange for raw materials. Some species had even thought you gods.

Then you met the Aeratang. Merciless, brutal, they destroyed your exploring ships and began to slaughter your colonies. But you found their home planet and launched the greatest fleet your kind ever built to carry the war to your enemy. To fight for your very survival.

Will it be enough?



Starmaster is a correspondence game of galactic exploration, diplomacy, and conquest allowing for interaction not only between each player and the worlds of the galaxy, but between the players themselves.

New players begin further out from the Galactic Center than established players allowing them to develop themselves among equals. You may lead a powerful reptilian race, carving out a vast empire of colony and subject worlds; or perhaps an insectoid species, engaged in a holy crusade to convert the galaxy to the worship of their many-legged god.

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The galaxies of StarMaster are a complete fantasy environment of solar systems, with geographies ranging from worlds near absolute zero to worlds where rivers of molten tungsten bubble, with technologies spanning from rock-throwing cave-dwellers to advanced Elder Races with near-godlike abilities.

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- Technology increases steadily, permitting faster, larger ships, deadlier weapons, and scientific breakthroughs.

The galaxies are dotted with the ruins of Elder civilizations lacking the strength to master the stars. Can you lead your world to greatness where so many others fell short?

StarMaster may be entered for $10.00 which includes the first three turns, a rule booklet, and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are $2.50 each.

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MINOR INSTITUTIONS OF CIDRI

by Forrest Johnson

There are several institutions of Cidri, in ***The Fantasy Trip***, which are of little interest to a Game Master, but which become important in solo playing.

Mercenary Wills

Adolphus the Dull got eaten by a mutant termagant in **Death Test XVIII.** *Rottentooth the Orc picked up his battle axe and Crosseyes the Mage appropriated the two bars of platinum he was carrying. But Adolphus left his $35,920 in savings outside the maze, along with his nifty +1 magic switchblade. The rules say, "The rulers of the area may take a percentage of the estate, ranging from 10% to the whole thing – depending on how greedy and despotic they are." A scrawled note at the bottom of Adolphus' sheet says, "Will – everything to Sssis the Reptile Man." What to do?*

The Mercenaries' Guild regularly acts as a bank for its members. A balance kept in one Hall can be drawn on from any other. Members can leave a will with the Guild, in the not-too-unlikely event of death. When the inevitable comes, the Guild simply transfers the balance from one account to another.

There is no fee for making a Mercenary Will, and local rulers seldom interfere. But the Guild *will* take 10% of the balance transferred as compensation for this service. If the heir is not a Guild member, the Guild's share jumps to 50%. (Of course, if the deceased was not a paid-up member, he could not keep a Mercenary Will at all.)

What about the magic switchblade? Roll one die. On 1-4, Sssis will find it among Adolphus' possessions. On a 5 or 6, it is lost, stolen, destroyed or otherwise gone for good. (If there were several items, Sssis would roll separately for each.)

The Apprentice Exchange

*Larnyx is an experienced wizard with an IQ18. He knows Lesser Magic Item Creation and some related spells, and would like to go into the magic manufacturing business. Having found a laboratory (***Advanced Wizard***, p. 8) for sale by means of a 5-die roll vs. IQ (p. 38), and having made a reaction roll and purchased the place, he is ready to set up shop, except for one problem. He is going to need a lot of apprentices. The rules say, "The GM plays all 'hired' characters." But no GM is available. How does Larynx get his apprentices?*

For every potential great mage in any population, there are several persons of lesser ability. Hence, there is rarely any shortage of apprentices. The Wizards' Guild Apprentice Exchange in any city always has a sufficiency of competent individuals, guaranteed to reliably supply 25 ST a day. (The wizard, of course, can himself furnish a similar amount.)

A wizard must have at least IQ12 to hire an apprentice. The Exchange will furnish all the apprentices you need for a fee of $50 a head. Each apprentice must be paid $50 a week. (This figure includes living expenses.) They work on 6-month contracts. If you fire an apprentice for any reason before his six months are up, you must give him $100 severance pay.

An Exchange apprentice will loyally assist in conjurations so long as he gets his pay. He will not go on adventures without a GM reaction roll. Once a year, he may demand a 10% pay raise. Roll 3 dice vs. *his* IQ. If he demands a raise and doesn't get one, he will quit (no severance pay necessary).

Naturally, you are obliged to teach your apprentice one spell every four months. But this should cause no inconvenience. You can assume he will learn in the course of his employment.

If you should want to learn more about your apprentice, you can roll for his race (***In The Labyrinth***, p. 7). If he is a giant or gargoyle, assume he has IQ9. Otherwise, he is a beginning character.

Roll one die for his IQ. On 1-3, it is 9. On 4 or 5, it is 10. On a 6, it is 11. His IQ will not normally be higher than that. Of the remaining points to be distributed, assign 1-3 to DX and the rest to ST.

Your apprentice *will* speak your language, unless you speak his. There is a 5-out-of-6 chance he will have Literacy, and a 1-in-6 chance he will have some other talent. (Determine randomly. If you roll up a talent for which he lacks DX or ST, roll again. If you roll up a talent which requires another talent as prerequisite, give him the prerequisite *and* the talent.)

Your apprentice *will* know the Aid spell. There is a two-thirds chance he will know Staff and a two-thirds chance he will know Detect Magic. Determine his other spells randomly.

Every week, roll 3 dice for the apprentice's job risk at 4/18. If he gets 3 or 4, add one point to an attribute chosen randomly. If he gets 18, he dropped a beaker or such worth $50, which is subtracted from his salary, and you should make a saving roll for him (ITL, p. 25). As for his salary, you do not keep the books for him. You can assume he finds some good use for the money.

Jailhouse Blues

Scrofula the Goblin was minding his own business, practicing his simple trade as a brigand, when he blew a couple of job rolls. By rare good fortune, he survived the 4 dice damage, but now he has only 1 ST left and is in jail. There is no prospect of an expedition to get him out. Should he despair?

Not necessarily. The jails of Cidri have a certain gross consistency. One may expect filth, vermin, rotten food, etc. Justice is slow. It may take months or even years for a case to come to trial.

A character in jail recovers from his wounds at only 1 ST *a week*. He is considered to be working at a 3/12 job with no pay. If he should roll a 3 one week, add nothing to his attributes but set him free; If he rolls 13 or higher, the usual consequences ensue.

When and if a character recovers completely from his wounds, he can try to break jail. Roll 6 dice vs. his highest attribute. If he fails, roll 5 dice vs. the same attribute, or he takes a beating of 2 dice damage from the angry guards. You cannot try to break jail more often than once a week.

A jailed character can also try to bribe his way out, assuming he has savings stashed away somewhere. First, write down the amount of swag you are offering the guards. (Money only; you can assume any magic weapons, etc., were confiscated.) Then, roll on the bribery table (ITL, p. 28).

Assume your turnkey earns $70 a month. If you roll a 6, he tricks you; you lose the whole stash and stay in jail. If you roll a 1, the bribery attempt fails, but you can try someone else next week. If you roll 2-5 and succeed in tempting the turnkey, make an adjusted reaction roll on one die. On a 6, you're free. Otherwise, try someone else next week.

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Expanding ASTEROID

by Steve Jackson

In my humble opinion, GDW's *Asteroid* is a moderately great game. Though its background is deliberately silly space-opera, the game system is fairly well-integrated, rewarding intelligent play and punishing impulsiveness. The components are attractive, the rules almost without ambiguity. I like it. But that's not to say I wouldn't make changes . . .

The first time I saw *Asteroid* played, I started making notes for alternate rules. Space-opera has so MANY clichés, after all . . . and this game comes nowhere close to covering them all. *Asteroid* is a great simulation of the bad sci-fi movies on the late show . . . as far as it goes . . . so let's see what else we can get in there.

Rule clarifications. There are two slightly ambiguous spots in the *Asteroid* rules, both concerning gunfire. When I have played it, it's been assumed that

(a) a wounded character can fire normally, though he cannot move;

(b) you may not attack an enemy in your square with a gun or disintegrator; you *must* make a melee attack.

Counter changes. For some reason, GDW did not mark "to hit" numbers or movement values on the character counters. I suggest you do so; referring to the table slows the game too much.

New Characters

Dr. Ferguson Liang is in his late '80s, but remarkably well-preserved; the last two decades of his life have been spent in space with Project Skymine and its predecessors. He is now the chief medic on Phobos. He is also a master of kung-fu. Dr. Liang's characteristics are 0 with guns (he hates the things); his KILL number is 4; his move is 4, and his melee value is 5. (It would be 6, but kung fu does not work as well on robots.) He has the special ability to give any wounded character first-aid (by means of his med-kit). He can also give himself first-aid. Each turn that Dr. Liang remains stationary in the square with a wounded figure, and they are not attacked, roll one die. On a roll of 1, that character's wounds vanish.

"Whizkid" West is a 12-year-old Science Fair winner; his prize was a field trip to Phobos. His special talent is robots – in fact, he's better at it than the Prof himself. Whizkid can fix a damaged robot as the Professor can. He can also attempt to repair an "erratic" robot on any turn when it is not being hostile. Proceed as if the robot were inoperable, rolling one die to determine the time needed to fix it. Continue to roll each turn for the robot's behavior. If it becomes hostile before it is fixed, it will NOT attack Whizkid – but it may attack other characters. The time he spent repairing the robot is lost.

Whizkid's statistics are 1 with guns at either close or far range (he's never used a gun before); 4 to kill, 2 to melee. He moves 4 squares per turn. Like Sasha, he is +1 to hit because of his size.

Neither the Professor nor Nicholle will leave the station without Whizkid. The other characters will gladly leave without him; he's something of a brat until you get to know him, and most people don't want to. (Exception: If Whizkid fixes and/or kills three or more robots, he will become the group mascot, and NOBODY will leave without him if he's still alive.) Whizkid will not leave if the Professor and/or Sasha are still in the station.

Crazy Eddie Wadsworth is a natural mimic. A research chemist from Phobos Station, he was acquainted with the mad Dr. McDonald, and can imitate his face, voice, and walk very well. A robot will not recognize Crazy Eddie as an enemy when it sees him unless (a) he attacks it, or (b) a 1 is rolled on one die. Only one die is rolled regardless of how many robots can see him. Once the robots attack Crazy Eddie, they will keep attacking him until he can get out of the sight of all robots. Then he can start over, confusing the robots all over again. But once he enters the room with the computer brain itself, he is recognized on a 1, 2, or 3 for the rest of the game.

All Crazy Eddie's statistics are the same as those for the Professor. He's not much of a fighter, but he makes a great scout.

New Gadgets

Who ever heard of a mad scientist leaving only one or two inventions lying around? There's no telling WHAT Dr. McDonald might have been working on. Some possibilities:

Anti-Gravity Belt. Any character wearing this belt can move any number of squares per turn, as long as he/she moves in a straight line and does not pass through doors or walls. The belt is no good in ventilator shafts, either – not enough space to fly in. The A-G belt will not break down.

Autodoc Belt. Push the button on this

belt and it will diagnose the nature of your wounds and inject medicine to cure you. *Theoretically.*

Any character except the robots and Sasha can wear this belt and use it if he/she is wounded. On a 1, 2, or 3 the wound is cured. On a result of 4 the belt breaks. On a 5 the belt breaks and kills the patient. On a 6 the belt kills the wounded character but does not break. As long as the belt does not break, it may be passed between characters and used any number of times. Lucky, Whizkid, and the Prof can fix this belt as though it were a robot.

If you want to balance the game in favor of the humans, you may make up extra counters for these two belts and hide them on the station. To keep the game balance the same but add unpredictability, let the robot player make note of which type of belt – invisibility, A-G, or autodoc – the one belt counter represents. Whizkid and the Professor can tell them apart. Anyone else will have to put a belt on and try it to see what it does.

Any belt is destroyed if the character wearing it is killed by gunfire.

Help for the Robots

With all these new characters and toys for the human side, the robot player needs some assistance. Possibilities:

Jump-Doors. The stairway markers between levels should be numbered in pairs, on the FRONT of each counter: two numbered 1, two numbered 2, two numbered 3, and two numbered 4, one each ascending and descending. Now these stairs represent jump-doors – teleporting devices. Number 1 up leads to number 1 down, and vice versa – but the counters may be placed anywhere in the station, as long as the UP counters are on the lower level and the DOWN counters are on the upper one. Now the humans will have a harder time finding their way around the station.

Dummy Chits. Take the "clone soldier" counters and let the robot player add them to the free placement group. These are dummy chits to confuse the human player. A dummy has no effect and is removed as soon as a human can "see" it. If Ms. Jones uses her powers on a dummy, the counter is NOT removed, even if she is told the truth about it.

Robot Tradeoffs. Point values are assigned to all robots as follows: Utility = 1. Mining = 3. Roamer = 5. Thus, the robots of the original setup are worth 57 points. The robot player may change the robots in his setup to any combination (counters will have to be improvised) that does not exceed 57 points' worth. Note that the setup rules remain the same; therefore, at least 3 utility robots must be taken.

Mobile Computer Brain. The computer brain could have mounted itself on one of the mining robots. If you use this option, just remove one mining-robot counter from the setup, and let the computer move and fight like a mining robot. The advantage to the robot player is that the computer brain can "run away" from the fight – and it may do this at any time, even before it is "seen" by the humans. The disadvantage is that any roll which destroys the mining-robot body will turn off the computer automatically, initiating the self-destruct sequence and making it easier for the humans to win.

The computer player does not have to tell the humans whether the brain is mobile until he moves the brain or until it is seen.

The Cyborg Double

Saving the best for last, here's a truly fiendish variant rule. Dr. McDonald, as part of his evil plan, prepared one very sophisticated robot . . . a cyborg double of one of the men at Phobos Station. He smuggled the robot to Phobos, where it did away with its human counterpart and replaced him. So now one of the human "heroes" is actually a robot! The Professor suspects, but has no proof . . .

If you use this variant, then you must (a) allow the player to start with a ship holding 14, instead of 12, or (b) allow the robot player only 45 points' worth of robots. At the game's beginning, the robot player looks at the human characters and chooses which one is the cyborg. It MUST be one of the adult characters from Phobos Station – and it CANNOT be Lucky, who is too lucky to have something like that happen to him. The robot player notes which character is the cyborg. Due to faulty programming, the cyborg does not sabotage the ship on the way in, or anything sensible. In fact, it does not reveal itself until the computer brain is first seen. At that time, it immediately changes sides. The robot player reveals the note showing who is the cyborg and takes command of that character. It moves and fights just as before – but for the other side.

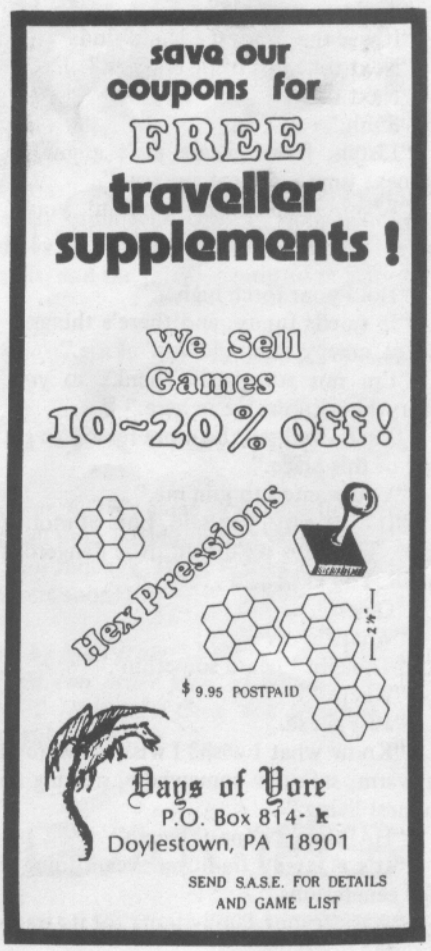
Before the cyborg is revealed, it will, of course, be controlled by the human player. The robot player will have to avoid destroying his own cyborg – but if he can keep the human player from guessing who is the cyborg, the surprise will be even more deadly.

Ms. Jones can attempt to use her powers to find out who the robot is. She may "scan" any or all of the characters (only once per character, and only one per turn). The robot player draws chits, as usual, to determine whether she lies or tells the truth. Thus, her determinations are not likely to be reliable.

One expedition member can attack another at any time the human player is sure he knows who the cyborg is. (The cyborg cannot start hostilities unless the computer brain has been found, and *must* start hostilities at that point.) If a "human" character is killed, the robot player must say either "Looks human," or "There are wires inside" – whether the character died as a result of a robot attack or a human attack. The only way to know who the cyborg is – until the computer brain is found – is to kill it.

For true fear and uncertainty, set up the scenario so the human player does not even know whether there's a cyborg at all – let alone who it is. Use dummy chits (as described above) and the robot point system. The robot player takes EITHER 57 points of robots OR 45 points plus a cyborg – and does not tell the human player which option he has taken, unless and until the cyborg is revealed . . . if there is one.

Asteroid is a lot of fun. These variants will make it even more unpredictable and "camp." Watch out for the cyborg, and good hunting.



Vignette Contest Results

The contest for issue 48 was a natural – write 500 words or less as a vignette, necessarily game-related. Surprisingly, response was limited; perhaps our creative writers were resting up from the rigors of the graffiti contest.

Our winners this month are Beth Ann Huffman and Milton Ironfield, who tied for first place. Both chose to write their entries in the form of conversations. So, without further ado:

Through the Looking-Door

"Shhh."

"Shhh yourself."

"You're supposed to be the quiet one."

"I *am* being quiet."

"Sounds like you brought enough armor."

"I believe in protection."

"And your sword?"

"It was the shortest I could find."

"Next time just bring daggers."

"Next time?"

"Shhh."

"Listen, friend, there ain't gonna be no next time – for me anyway."

"Why? Atmosphere spookin' you?"

"Yeah. No! This place ain't right. It's dark, and . . ."

"Hold your torch higher."

"It smells funny, and there's things – weird, creepy things, lookin' at me."

"I'm not surprised. Thanks to you, everything knows we're here."

"Yeah, well, all the more reason to get out of this place."

"You wanted to join me."

"It'd be easy, you said. Lots of money in it. Treasures we'd find. Not dangerous at all. You *even* said . . ."

"Quiet!"

"What?"

"Thought I heard somethin'."

"Where?"

"Just ahead."

"Know what I wish? I wish we were in a warm, safe pub somewhere, making an honest living."

"HA! Some 'honest' living."

"It's a family tradition. Been doing it for generations."

"Wasn't your family hung for its traditions?"

"Only a couple. Besides, if they're dumb enough to get caught . . ."

"There it is again!"

"What? Where?"

"That door – wooden, I think. It's coming from behind that door. Sounds like, like breathing. What are you doing?"

"Getting my sword ready!"

"Hold my torch. I'm gonna open it."

"Let's just forget it, OK? We'll go back, have some ale, a few laughs, maybe a . . ."

"Shut up!"

"Right."

"At least you could help me push."

"Why?"

"There may be treasure inside."

"No treasure is worth this."

–Beth Ann Huffman

Adventures in the Sci-Fi Zone

Late one Friday night, several students engross themselves in a game of ***Dungeons & Dragons*** . . .

"By the Dragon, I wish they'd quit! Andros, they've been playing for the past sixteen hours and all we've been doing is slaying dragons and hoarding treasure. Their crummy DM has even let them overlook giving us the past three days' rations! I'm starving, this sword is giving me a backache, and worst of all, my new +1 helmet is four sizes too small!"

"Calm down, Beregond; they'll put us back in the closet soon. Besides, the pay is good and the occupational hazards are minimal."

"Yeah, sure! Singed twice by those dragons, almost eaten alive by green slime, my shield hand amputated at the thumb-knuckle and still bleeding, while you kick back with lightning bolts and fireballs. And all we have to show for it are fifteen copper pieces and a burned out +10 flaming sword! So much for the overtime pay. This job is killing me!"

"Relax! The adventure is almost over, and then we can go home to our nice, quiet closet. We could even try my new role-playing game, 'Social 1980s' . . ."

Later, back in the closet . . .

"By the Dragon! It only took four more hours of trolls, lizard men, and that fifty-meter cart they called an ogre until they ran out of things for us to kill! Now, Andros, let's see your new game."

"First I'll give you a character. Do you want to be a businessman, laborer, politician, or serviceman?"

"I'll be a politican, since I have a wisdom of sixteen. I think I'll run for president, and try a little bribery for extra votes."

"Dumb rules. Where in the world am I supposed to get 3-sided dice?! This 100-sided will do. Wow! If it wasn't for that touch of bribery, you wouldn't have made it. But next time you'll have to be more careful; I once had a character, Nixon, who got caught. That was the end of him."

"Hey, why don't we use your new lead figures?"

"Good idea. They're right here in my wardrobe. Hey, I don't remember setting them in a circle. Aieey! Th . . . th . . . they're holding tiny dice . . . and papers . . . and . . . and . . . little lead figures!!!"

Several students, miniatures, and a role-playing game that can only be played . . . in the *Sci-Fi-Zone.*

–Milton Ironfield

Contest

Next month's contest might seem simple. Create a spell. Create a spell for whichever FRPG you prefer. Simplicity itself!

But there's a catch (hee, hee). It must be an utterly *trivial* spell: Detect Chocolate. Turn Scarecrow. Parkin's Mystic Pillow. Summon Bunny.

And there's another catch. (Don't complain, that's two for the prize of one.) This utterly banal, trivial spell must still be useful, even life-saving, under the right circumstances. The less formidable the spell, and the more reasonable the circumstances under which it becomes important, the better its chances of victory. And use *some* imagination: Trivializing "summon food & water" into "summon Twinkies and Pepsi" is an automatic no-no.

The first-place winner will receive a $50 certificate from SJ Games; the second-place winner receives one for $20. These may be used for any product produced by SJ Games, including the games, subscriptions to TSG and F&M, bumper stickers, whatever. Entries must be postmarked by no later than July 15, 1982. All entries will become the property of TSG; we reserve the right to award fewer or no prizes if we receive no entries of publishable quality.

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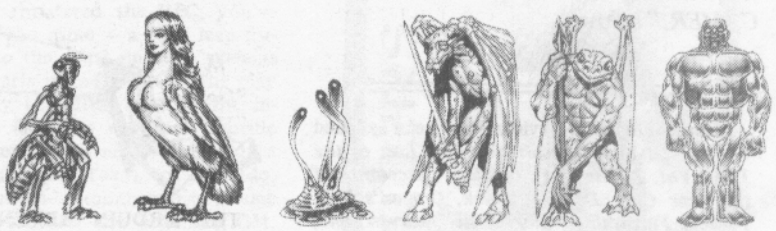

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Each set is $3.00 at your hobby shop. If you can't find them locally, you can order by mail from SJ Games, at $3.00 per set PLUS 50 cents per set postage and handling. (Note: subscribers to TSG or F&M can order from us without the postage fee.) Other sets available are Fantasy Set 1 (Player Characters), Fantasy Set 2 (Brigands, Orcs, and Goblins), Fantasy Set 3 (Half-Orcs, Reptile Men, and Kobolds), and Fantasy Set 4 (Animals) – all in full color.

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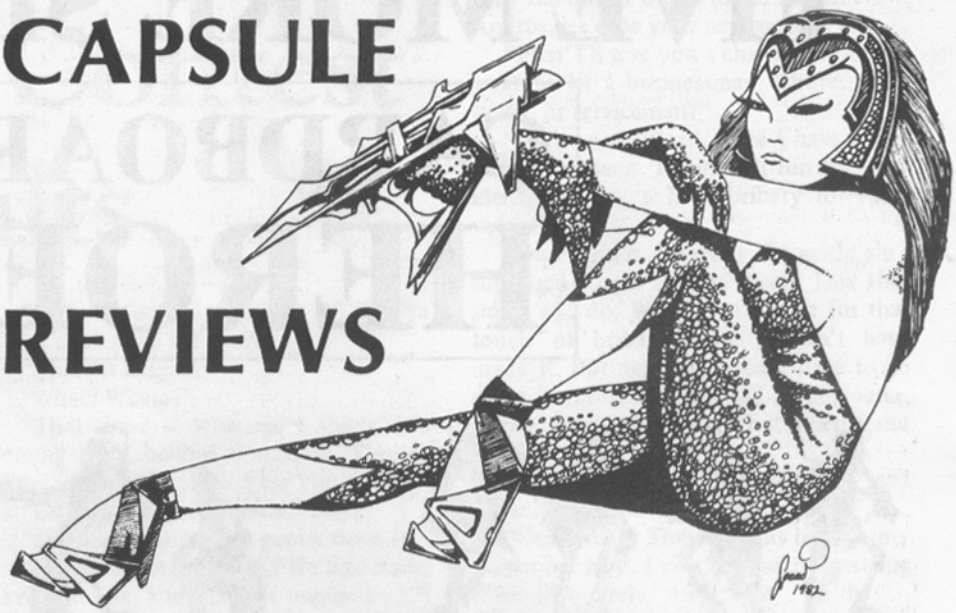
CAPSULE REVIEWS



THE SPACE GAMER reviews board games, role-playing games, computer games, video games, and game supplements. We review play-by-mail games if a reviewer is enrolled. We will review any science fiction or fantasy game if the publisher supplies a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical wargames. TSG may publish a review of a game we are not sent – IF a reader submits a review.

The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine. For information on writing reviews for TSG, see "Writing Reviews for THE SPACE GAMER," below.

Games for which reviews have been assigned or received include: ***Barnstorming, Best of the JTAS Vol. 2, The Book of Mars, Catacombs of the Bear Cult, Demon Attack, Dragon's Hall, Fantasy Furnishings, Glory Hole Dwarven Mine, Grand Master of the Martial Arts, Grand Prix, Haunted House, Highway 2000, Ice Hockey, The Illhiedrin Book, Man, Myth & Magic, Merchant Prince, Pac-Man, Stampede, Stellar Track, Tegel Manor, Trading Team, Valley of the Mists,*** and ***Wizard's Realm.***

Games for which we are currently seeking reviewers include: ***Asteroid Pirates, Field Guide to Encounters, Merc, Pirates & Plunder, Starline 2200 Hex Sheets,*** and ***Ysgarth Rule System.***

THE ARDUIN ADVENTURE (Grimoire Games); $10.00. Designed by David A. Hargrave. Boxed, with an 8½" x 11", 64-page rulebook, three character sheets, sixteen weapon cards, and two dice. Three or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

THE ARDUIN ADVENTURE is an introduction to fantasy role-playing/adventure gaming, ARDUIN has six basic character races (elf, dwarf, hobbit, human, amazon, and half-orc) and five character classes (warrior, thief, priest, mage, and forester).

The alignment chart gives a good selection of alignment choices. ARDUIN also has weather charts and general living costs for characters. The combat chart is more realistic than some I have seen; it doesn't allow a normal dagger to penetrate magical plate and shield. The saving roll chart is more detailed for specific saves. Some of the spells are unique and the magic system uses manna points. The sample adventure is interesting and can easily be converted to other systems.

WRITING REVIEWS FOR THE SPACE GAMER

Capsule Reviews

Most of the reviews we print will be "capsule" reviews – 400 words or less. We pay $5 for each capsule review accepted. We want to run a review for *every* new SF or fantasy game or supplement.

Each capsule review should be five paragraphs long and contain:

(1) Basic information. Present these facts, in this order: NAME OF GAME (Publisher); price. Designer. (If applicable: "Supplement to ____," "Companion to ____," or similar note.) Format: list of components, with sizes of maps and rulebooks, number of counters, etc. Number of players; playing time. Publication date.

(2) General description of the game: background, the sides, course of play, special features, etc.

(3) Strong points. Discuss what is good about the game; in every game, there *is* something worthwhile. "Fun" is a useless adjective. Be specific.

(4) Weak points. Every game has its problems, too. If the only faults you can find are minor ones, say so. If the game is fatally flawed, come right out and SAY SO. If you can phrase your criticisms as suggestions for improvement, do so.

(5) Summation. Your overall opinion of the game. Who should and should not buy it, and why. Is the game worth its price?

All reviews must be signed; the reviewer's name *will* be printed. No game may be reviewed by its designer, by a playtester, or by an employee of the publisher. (Designer's articles are welcome, but must be billed as such!) Final note: If you can write a complete review in less than the full 400 words, by all means do so.

This review format is designed to encourage fairness and to give the reader enough information to let him decide whether he wants to buy that game. Keep that in mind when you write. This is a short review, *not* a complete analysis. For those who want to write longer reviews, each issue will have one or two –

Featured Reviews

These will be game reviews 1,000 to 2,000 words long. They should contain *all the above information,* plus whatever else the reviewer wants to say. They may be written in any format. A featured review may cover either a new game or one that has been on the market for some time. If TSG has not already printed a capsule review, write one and submit it at the same time. We may even use both.

However, the weak points make the game a strain for players. The rules are sketchy. They talk about thieves picking locks and disarming traps but there are no rules for this. The experience system is unrealistic and the combat system is too complex. The constant spelling of magic as "magik" is needless; the forester class and the amazon race are useless. There are only a few magic items in the book, which suggests that players invent their own.

I would recommend ARDUIN to those who would like to add some of the rules to their campaign. For a few more dollars, you could buy a better and more complete fantasy role-playing game.

–Mike Kardos

MOON BASE CLAVIUS (Task Force); $3.95. Designed by Kerry Anderson. Bagged: one 18" x 21" map, 18-page 5½" x 8½" rulebook, 108 die-cut counters. 2 players; playing time 45 minutes. Published 1981.

It's those damned Commies again! This time it's the Sovyetskaya Lunaya Armia – that's Soviet Moon Army to us – making a sneak attack on our Air Force boys at Clavius Moon Base. Combat comes before movement, and units represent soldiers, moon tanks, and nuclear mortar teams. The combat system is unique: Attack strengths are added. The final number is checked against a terrain chart to obtain a "to hit" number; the attacker may make one die roll for each defender. There are three scenarios: "The Initial Soviet Attack," "The Siege of Clavius," "The Marines Land," and a campaign game connecting all three together.

The rules are well-written and clear. The combat system is not only new, but reflects nuclear warfare without complex rules. The game also provides a feel for lunar combat as troops hunker down behind the crater walls and blast the oncoming enemy.

However, the playtesters didn't do their job. The Americans will automatically win both the first scenario and the campaign game simply by retreating two hexes per turn! The other scenarios favor the defender. Overrun rules should have been included – a line of mortar teams can stop the whole Soviet army. The map should have been more accurate and better-drawn. Chrome units like headquarters, engineers, and the monorail just clutter the game. The scale seems strange – maximum density is one man every six square miles!? A turn marker is provided, but there's no place on the map for it.

MOON BASE CLAVIUS is a simple, fun game. If it were balanced I would recommend it. It isn't, so I can't.

–W.G. Armintrout

WILD WEST (Fantasy Games Unlimited); $11. Designed by Anthony B. LeBoutillier and Gerald D. Seypura. Boxed, with 40-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 22" x 28" two-sided map, 4 stiff 8½" x 11" play aids. (Two 20-sided and three 6-sided dice are required but not included.) Published 1981.

WILD WEST is a role-playing game of (what else?) the American West after the Civil War. Player-characters have 22 attributes, some of which are rolled on 3d6 and some of which are derived from the others. Attributes have one function – they are used to figure out skill ratings (CVs) for each of the ten skills a PC may start with. Skills range from mule-skinning to demolition, with bartending and quick-draw thrown in; experience points are kept for each skill. Combat takes place in rounds and segments (6 rounds to a segment). Before a segment's combat is acted out, each player must plan on paper his actions for the next six rounds ("F" = fire, "9OL" = 90° to the left). Weapons are rated for damage, range, load and reload time. Damage is tracked for seven body areas; effect depends on the percentage of hit points that part has lost. More rules cover horses (which have attributes and *skills*), medicine, explosives, and adventures (e.g., cattle drives).

This game is built around a basic system – the RPC. The RPC is a stiff piece of paper with 5 number lines on it. By finding your experience level in a skill on one line and your CV on another line, and then connecting the points together with a straight-edge, you can find your percentage chance of success from one of the 3 remaining number lines (rated for difficulty: A, B, or C). This system is used for everything – shooting, brawling, lock-picking and wrangling. Once you've mastered the RPC, you've mastered 80% of the game – a giant leap forward compared to the usual multiple systems and hordes of charts in most RPGs. The play aids, while hardly beautiful, hold all the information you're likely to need and provide sample record sheets. The map – one side a map of the West from Texas to Colorado, the other side a room-by-room map of Dodge City – is heaven-sent for the beginning GM.

The problem is that the basic system is presented, and little else. There are a lot of little holes: How do you pick up a new skill? How does misfiring work? The rulebook is sketchy about how to set up an adventure. Organization is unusual –combat is scattered in four sections. Novices won't know the difference between d10 and d20. Luck is a factor in rolling up a character. Two die rolls can make or break: accuracy, which single-handedly determines marksmanship; and marksmanship experience, a roll on one die that gives anywhere from 20 to 120 experience points (with 140 being the total possible in a lifetime!). Combat may also bog down, since you receive experience points every time you hit your target, which forces you to go back to the RPC to refigure your odds to hit for next time.

Nevertheless, I found these problems to be only minor for two reasons: First, the soundness of the basic system of the game; and second, the fact that the Wild West is a well-known era (even I, no cowboy, find it easier to conjure up Dodge City than medieval London). WILD WEST is OK in my book – the good basic system makes up for the lack of polish. It is worth looking into.

–W. G. Armintrout

SUPPLEMENTS

BROADSWORD (GDW); $4.98. Designed by Loren K. Wiseman and Marc Miller. Adventure for ***Traveller***. One 6" x 9" 48-page booklet. Number of players and playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

BROADSWORD, GDW's newest full-length ***Traveller*** adventure, is somewhat of a departure from recent adventures, harking back to ***The Kinunir*** more than anything else. It centers around the 800-ton *Broadsword* class of mercenary cruisers, first outlined in the *Traveller Journal* no. 8. In addition to reprinting the text and plans of the *Broadsword* cruisers, BROADSWORD features information on the ship's personnel and troop complements, including pregenerated crew and troops, and several mercenary-type scenarios revolving around situations on the planet Garda-Villis at the start of the Fifth Frontier War. These include raids against rebel outposts, ambushes by Sword Worlds forces and skirmishes with Zhodani commandos.

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Information on opposing forces and ships, a subsector map, and a section of library data fill out the adventure. Guildelines on integrating BROADSWORD with *Mercenary* and *Striker* are also given.

BROADSWORD is unique in that players actually take the part of the crew or troops of the ship, rather than being adventurers who may merely encounter such personnel, as in *The Kinunir*. Through the use of the scenarios and extra information provided, the adventure could be used as the basis for an entire mercenary campaign. A nice touch is the listing of several Sword Worlds vehicles in *Striker* terms, adding to the roster of "standard" vehicles players may draw from.

The only problems in BROADSWORD center around the slightly sketchy nature of the scenarios (though most refs shouldn't have any trouble filling these in) and the amount of reprinted material. Most dedicated *Traveller* players will already have the *Broadsword* material from the *Journal* and own *The Spinward Marches* supplement, making the map unnecessary (though it's nice to have it in the new format). Referees will have to be careful to balance the opposing forces against the experience and abilities of the players, too – especially in the Sword Worlds ambush.

Despite such minor points, BROADSWORD should prove an enjoyable *Traveller* adventure, especially to players who are militarily-inclined.

–William A. Barton

CORSAIRS OF THE TURKU WASTE (Judges Guild); $5.98. Designed by Dave Sering. Approved for *Traveller*. 8½" x 11" 32-page book. Number of players and playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

The adventure takes place in the Gateway Quadrant, with an area in the Crucis Margin mapped as the primary location, though other Gateway locations are suggested as well. Several brief scenarios are given, including the almost obligatory boarding party scenario and the salvage of a wrecked corsair, with an assault on a pirate hideout and an escape from an pirate prison in between. Information is included on the planet Mellansl, location of the pirate hideout, and on the various political factions in the Union Crucis which affect the adventure. The pirate base is mapped out and explained fully. PC/NPC stats and descriptions are given, from pirate notables to crews of the corsairs to boarding and assault parties. Perhaps the most interesting item in CORSAIRS, however, is the set of plans and descriptions for the Type P Corsair, *Hellbeast*, which presents an intriguing alternate design to that given in *High Passage* no. 2, complete with diagrams of the ship camouflaged with its false fins and modules.

CORSAIRS OF THE TURKU WASTE is an excellent adventure for players who either long to play ruthless pirate characters or who wish to combat them. The characters, especially the crews of the *Hellbeast* and *Green Penumbra*, are interestingly described and should be quite playable. The varying designs for the corsair prove a nice extra, too.

Few problems are evident in CORSAIRS. The ship status/crew status sheet with the wreck salvage scenario could have used a bit more explanation. The random thug table seems set up for a d20 die roll rather than the standard *Traveller* d6s. Most of the ships on the ship-to-ship combat table shouldn't prove much of a challenge to the corsairs described here.

Despite such minor flaws, CORSAIRS OF THE TURKU WASTE stands, along with *Simba Safari*, as one of Judges Guild's best *Traveller* adventures since *Tancred*.

–William A. Barton

DEATH DUEL WITH THE DESTROYERS (FGU); $5.00. Designed by Bill Willingham. One 22-page 8½" x 11" book. For referee and indefinite number of players; playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

For those gamers who wish to indulge in superheroics, comes FGU's first adventure scenario for its veteran superhero RPG, *Villains & Vigilantes*. DEATH DUEL represents the first battle between a group of superhero player-characters and the mysterious Dr. Apocalypse, a super-scientific villain in the manner of Dr. Doom or Lex Luthor. Dr. A, after throwing the weather of the eastern U.S. out of kilter, threatens to start destroying cities unless Manhattan Island is turned over to him as a sovereign state. To prove his capabilities and the seriousness of his intent, he sends a huge Doomsday Robot to flatten Times Square. The heroes must stop it, then trace it back to the headquarters of the Destroyers – Dr. A's personal group of supervillains. Then the Destroyers – Annihilator, Shapeshifter, Behemoth, Ratman, Electrocutioner and Iron

FIRE & MOVEMENT

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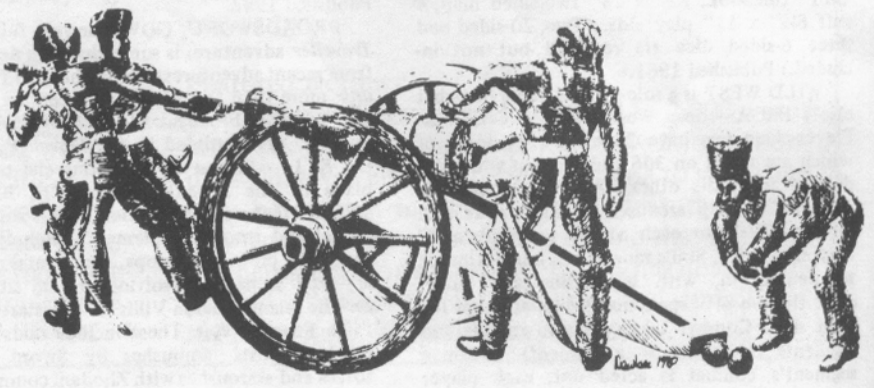

Maiden – must be taken in a smash-bang, knock-down super battle. The scenario includes details of the Doomsday Robot, the Destroyers' HQ and the Destroyers themselves, plus maps of Times Square, the three floors and roof of Destroyer HQ, and the interior levels of the robot.

DEATH DUEL WITH THE DESTROYERS has several interesting aspects. It is relatively complete, and includes information on what to do if the player-heroes are defeated by the robot (horrors!) and an out for them if the Destroyers manage to best them. Plus, since ***Villains & Vigilantes*** is apparently being revised, the stats of the Destroyers, the robot, and its crew are given in both the original V&V format and in the new, revised format. Even if you're one of those who isn't enamored with V&V, the adventure description is adequate enough to convert to one of the second-generation superhero RPGs such as ***Champions*** or ***Superworld***.

The only real problem I have with DEATH DUEL, other than minor errors, is its length. When you take into consideration all the comic strip sections included, the adventure itself is a bit slim (the strips are excellently drawn; they just take up several pages of usable space). Plus, the adventure is only half-complete: The showdown with Dr. A is to be a forthcoming adventure (though a resolution of sorts is provided if the GM doesn't wish to wait for Part Two).

Overall, though, DEATH DUEL WITH THE DESTROYERS could provide a good evening or two of superheroic action. If you haven't yet given up on V&V, wish to wait for the revised rules, or feel up to adapting it to another system, it could prove worth your investment.

–William A. Barton

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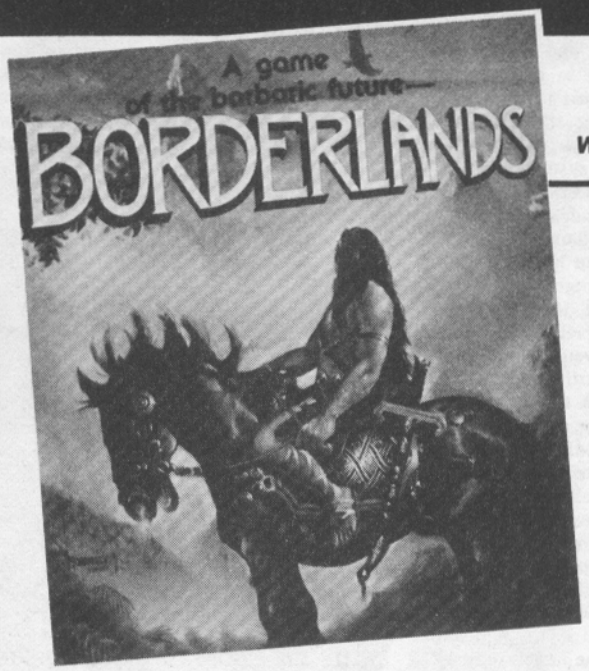

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FANTASTIC PERSONALITIES (Judges Guild); $6. Written by Bill Paley and Edward G. Mortimer. "Universal Fantasy Supplement." 64 8½" x 11" pages including covers. Published 1981.

85 non-player characters (not 78 as the introduction states) are described at length. Descriptions include level, social level, armor, alignment (ninefold method), class, and 14 ability numbers, to be selected from in accordance with the requirements of the user's FRPG. Although nominally universal, the statistics and text are aimed at D&D and other games with hit point and class/profession systems. Spells, for example, have disguised AD&D names such as "fiery fingers" (burning hands), "slumber" (sleep), and "lively lights" (dancing lights).

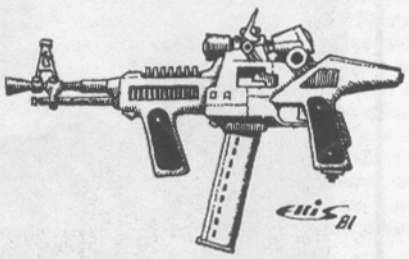
There are 21 fighters, two or three each of illusionists, druids, assassins, rangers, and paladins, 14 magic-users, 15 thieves, 12 clerics, and eight mixed classes. Average level is fourth to fifth, with a high of one eleventh, and four tenths. The personalities and motivations of the NPCs are generally good, and there are few grammatical errors or typos for a JG product.

There is a full-figure or bust drawing of each NPC. Artwork varies from fair to poor, and one adventurer looks much like another after a while. There is also a section beside each three-inch drawing which lists categories such as morale, retainers, nemesis, etc., followed by blanks. I don't know what this is for, since such things (and others like religion, location in the JG world, and so on) are included in the text descriptions. Without this and the largely useless drawings, another 50-60 NPCs could have been included in a booklet this size. Text would be much easier to read if divided into two columns.

A long list of NPCs should be indexed by race, alignment, class, and level, so that a GM can find exactly what he wants to fill a given role, without having to read through 85 descriptions. Unfortunately, FANTASTIC PERSONALITIES is not indexed at all. (The table of contents is virtually useless, since it is not alphabetized.) The NPCs should also have been numbered, in case the user wants to roll a d100 and take whatever he gets.

While the characters themselves are good (if you can't or won't devise NPCs yourself), the layout and editorial conception of the booklet is poor. You should get more than this for $6.

–Lewis Pulsipher



THE FCI CONSUMER GUIDE (FASA); $6.00. Designed by Steve Harmon. Approved for ***Traveller.*** One 6" x 9" 48-page booklet. Published 1982.

THE FREEDONIAN CONSUMER INSTITUTE PRODUCT RESEARCH DIVISION CONSUMER GUIDE, VOLUME I, to quote the full title of this handy supplement, covers equipment ranging from tools to weapons accessories, from life support gear to ordinary clothing, from communications gear to vision aids – and more. Each item is listed with complete statistics of weight, cost, height, length, and width, along with a descriptive paragraph. The player's section features 29 pages of gear than could prove useful in a wide range of situations. The referee's section lists several manufacturers for each item, their tech levels, and availability and reliability factors. The latter are used with two given formulas so the referee can determine if a listed item is actually available on a certain world or not, and how well it works under stress conditions.

Most listings are quite helpful. You may not have a character wanting to buy a hacksaw or a relay satellite every adventure, but some listings, such as the clothing and the camping gear, will probably prove high-demand items. Having such a catalog at hand will eliminate time wasted in devising equipment on the spot or beforehand, allowing more time for play or for creating the important parts of an adventure. Many of the FCI items are intriguing – shock canes, hypodermic canes, remote control gun/camera mounts, vacc suit magnetic soles and IR/LI combo goggles among them.

Most problems in FCICG are minor: typos, printing flubs, etc. No provisions are made for fractions on the availability roll, a problem when dealing with tech levels lower than that of the manufacturer of the item. And there is nothing to keep the player from perusing the ref section, though his prior knowledge will have no effect on actual rolls to determine reliability or availability. An item-by-item index would have been nice, too.

All in all, THE FCI CONSUMER GUIDE could prove to be one of the more useful supplements yet published for ***Traveller.***

–William A. Barton

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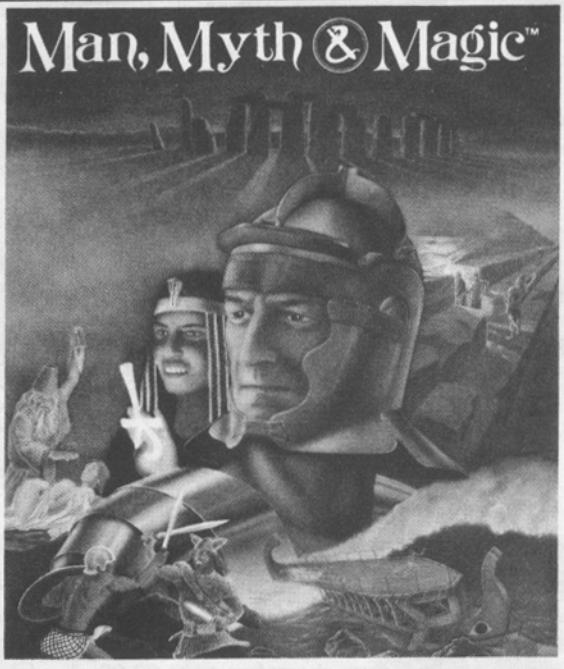

It is summer, 41 A.D. Your journey has been long and arduous but at last you and the rest of your party camp within the great stone ring of Salisbury plain and spend an anxious night waiting for the golden glow of the midsummer day's dawn. Your thought's are not of the mad emperor, Caligula, who sent you on this maniacal quest, nor do they dwell upon the evil clans of Black Druids who stood between you and this night; but rather of the unknown, mystical dangers that lurk within these very stone megaliths, dangers and powers that will be unleashed as sure as the sun will rise. Obsessed with this premonition of danger you have not the slightest inkling that when that same sun rises you will be irresistibly pulled into a series of events of such magnitude that they not only dwarf Caligula and Rome itself; but form the greatest adventure in human history. You have not the slightest suspicion that tomorrow's dawn will throw you into danger and intrigue that will lead you to discover . . . **The riddle of Stonehenge! . . . The secrets of the pyramids! . . . The mysteries of the ancient world!** as you play **Man, Myth & Magic.**

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F'DECK FO'S TOMB (Judges Guild); $2.00. Designed by Scott Fulton. "Universal" FRP supplement. 14 8½" x 11" typeset pages including covers and 2 pages of maps. Published 1981.

This is not really an adventure module, but a collection of loosely connected venues for fantasy gaming. The tomb is just five rooms, two containing treasure, one containing a lich. If you're lucky, you get all the treasure and don't find the monster; otherwise, unless you're very powerful you're dead. The other venues are a barbarian village, a *small* castle, and an even smaller lair of a were-jaguar. Only the village is of much use, and most of the booklet is devoted to describing the heads of the extended families in the village, as well as briefly mentioning the other members. There are a few interesting traits and conflicts among the villagers, but as a whole it is hard to believe. For example, men range from 6'5" to 4'6", with as many in the six- and four-foot ranges as in the five-foot range. In an isolated village, presumably quite inbred, how could this occur? And how can all the heads of families be of adventurer class (up to fifth level), but no one else?

The introduction and guides for the GM are either confusing or non-existent. Although billed as a "Universal Fantasy Supplement," it is simply D&D without the name; the only effort to universalize, in lists of characteristics, is botched. Why, too, must Judges Guild persist in including ranges of treasure value in their modules instead of fixed values – isn't one purpose of module publications to save the GM a lot of dice-rolling time? The cover blurb is misleading, and why put a map on the back, where players can see it? Editing is generally poor. Physical production is decent; two columns per page would be more readable.

Even at $2, this booklet is a waste of money.

–Lewis Pulsipher

HOUSE ON HANGMAN'S HILL (Judges Guild); $3.95. Designed by Jon Mattson. Approved for AD&D. 27 pages of text and one map. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

Near the village of Hedgehill there is a sprawling mansion, haunted by its unjustly-executed owner. The party enters by one of six doors and wanders through 38 rooms of illusions, fun house effects, and encounters until they destroy the offending revenant or run away.

True to the horror-movie theme, some eerie events with *no* consequences are included just to make the players jump. There are also NPCs, rats, werewolves, and plenty of undead. Some of the worst fights can be avoided, so players who automatically charge will be punished. The room paragraphs are well-organized, and the map is amply detailed.

However, a haunted-house atmosphere may not suit all players. If you break the mood, the map becomes another generic dungeon with a few more exits. D&D players always partook more of horror movies than Conan, and the players may see no difference. The DM should add marginal reminders (to himself) to mention cobwebs and creaking floors. The floor plan is a 400' x 280' ranch house; it would match both the cover art and horror movies better if it had three stories. I suggest you rescale the map from 10' to 5' squares before you run it. I also suggest you encourage the party to walk around the outside. It is a house, not a burrow; give the players a grid sheet with doors and outside walls marked.

This adventure will be enjoyable if some of the players are horror movie fans. Average characters should be third- or fourth-level because more powerful parties will not have the fun of being scared.

–Ian L. Straus

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MISTYWOOD (Flying Buffalo); $4.95. Designed by Roy Cram. Solo dungeon for *Tunnels & Trolls*. 26-page 8½" x 11" booklet, illustrated. One player; playing time two hours. Published 1981.

You slew the impudent young rake who assaulted you in that brothel in Kasar – how were you to know he was Grand Duke Bronzo's only heir? You have fled before the wrath of Bronzo to the town of Bumley, on the border of the legend-haunted Mistywood. Half the shops are empty, boarded-up shells, while a midnight howling awakens you from your sleep at the inn. I can't tell you any more without spoiling your fun, except that this solo dungeon is for a single humanoid character, 110 combat adds maximum, no magic allowed. Progress is from paragraph to paragraph in the usual way, with a subroutine for random encounters. The book includes ten major encounters and 24 minor encounters.

This adventure has style! Heaven forbid me, but I enjoyed myself even when my character died. The encounters are interesting, including traps, pits, and a good share of saving rolls. I never felt hemmed in by my options. The physical production is top-notch, with artwork that excellently complements the descriptions.

Flying Buffalo needs to set a *minimum* combat adds guideline for their solo dungeons. With an average Monster Rating of 110 – taking monster groups into consideration – any character with fewer than 65 combat adds is in for trouble! Rolling 1d6 for number of monsters encountered is too random – the difference between four and six muckmen can be life and death for a character. In the T&T tradition there is plenty of opportunity for death, but most of these can be avoided by good judgment or the right saving roll – the sole exception being an invincible dragon who pops up randomly.

I had a very good time with MISTYWOOD. If you like T&T lethality, and if you stick to characters with at least 65 combat adds, I recommend it.

–W.G. Armintrout

PORTALS OF IRONTOOTH (Judges Guild); $3.98. Designed by Rudy Kraft. Adventure approved for AD&D. One 48-page 8½" x 11" booklet. 2 or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

This is the second supplement in the Portals series, which is a set of adventure sites connect-

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ed by a chain of interplanetary (or interdimensional) teleportation portals. The first scenario in the series, ***Portals of Torsh***, was an uninspired adventure set on a lizardman-dominated world; IRONTOOTH deals with an iron-laden region of the world Hnoon. It is better than its predecessor.

The Irontooth colony and surrounding regions seem to be built above refined iron instead of bedrock. Swamps and mountains come complete with rust flakes, and the region's indigenous lifeforms, the Irontooths, have skins of metal. They are also immune to direct applications of magic, which makes this adventure interesting for magicians and clerics – they have to use their brains in creature encounters. This adventure is not a specific quest or set of encounters – it is a region with inhabitants spelled out, history detailed, and scenarios suggested. Adventurers can explore, hunt, interact with the human settlers or regional inhabitants, or whatever, without being dragged toward an inevitable specific encounter or end. On the production end, the text is professionally typeset, the booklet features several color pages, and the artwork is pretty good.

That last generalization does *not* extend to the cover, which is unappealing and unanatomical. PORTALS was cleanly typeset, but lacks editing. Admittedly, this problem doesn't get in the way of the adventure; I simply have a bias against the consistent mangling of the English language.

This scenario is competently written, packaged, and presented, and offers opportunities for entertaining play. The slice-at-a-time feel to this series doesn't promote in-depth adventures in any single setting, but neither does it prevent it. I recommend PORTALS OF IRONTOOTH to scenario buyers.

–Aaron Allston

VAULT OF THE NI'ER QUEYON (FGU); $5.00. Designed by Stefan Jones. Supplement for ***Space Opera***. One 8½" x 11" 24-page book. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

This adventure is a quest covering vast distances and a large amount of game time. The aim is to solve the puzzles, find the "Vault of the Ni'er Queyon," get the loot and get out. The book provides the star master with the clues and pitfalls encountered along the way.

This is an excellent, informative, and relatively complete campaign adventure. The artwork is good. Most of the needed information is included. The VAULT can be considered to be a sequel to ***Alien Base***, but is playable on its own. FGU is steadily improving the quality of its adventure supplements.

VAULT OF THE NI'ER QUEYON does have problems, however. The personalities and characteristics of several vital NPCs are left to the creation of the star master. At another point there is mention of about 100 alien derelicts, with the possibility of salvage. Did Stefan Jones realize when he included this "sargasso of space" the problems created for the star master? Most players will not be satisfied with just the treasure; many will want fleets. This produces the problem of designing alien starships and their technologies. No deck plans or descriptions are included! What we do see is the deck plans of a Denoba Spice Runner to be used by the players. This redundancy is a nice touch for those without ***Seldon's Compendium***, but less redundancy and more information is needed.

Overall, VAULT OF THE NI'ER QUEYON is an excellent adventure, well worth the price. There is a wealth of background data. With a few exceptions, this will be easily adapted to most ***Space Opera*** campaigns.

–Kenneth Uecker

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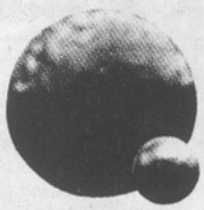

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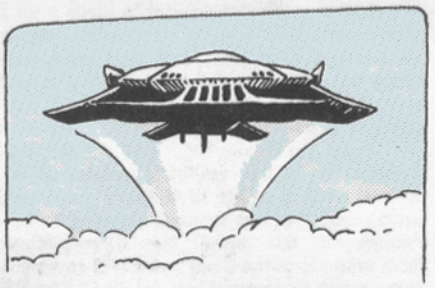
MICROWORLD (Med Systems Software); $19.95 cassette, $22.95 disk. Program for 16K TRS-80. Designed by Arti Haroutunian. 1 player; playing time indefinite. Can be saved. Published 1981.

MICROWORLD is a text adventure game. The player is transformed into an "electroid" inside a TRS-80 computer, and travels through the circuits, searching for colored IC chips. There are over eighty locations to be explored. Most correspond with some part of the TRS-80's hardware, but some are purely fictitious. The object of the game is not immediately apparent, and this is one of MICROWORLD's main faults.

Except for the "Charactoid" which occasionally appears and steals the ICs you've found, and a tendency to exit the game without warning, there is little hazard. One can spend hours just mapping. Most of the brief location descriptions are quite humorous – for example: "North Ground Plane. Electrons are constantly falling out of the sky and landing on their valences."

This benign quality of the game is both a fault and a strong point. If you are used to the more bloodthirsty adventure game, you will quickly become bored. The game has an undeniable educational quality, though that is not the designer's intention. While a little too cute for someone who knows the workings of a computer, and while the correspondence between game locations and real hardware is not exact, a complete mapping of the game's locations will give a beginner a rough idea of the physical structure of a computer.

The puzzles are not easily solved, and for some of the more difficult ones, "Hint Sheet"



(which is $1.00 extra) is a must. This is a strike against it for younger players. But for the intelligent child, the adventure gaming beginner, or someone who'd just like to "get into" his or her computer for a while, MICROWORLD can be a lot of fun.

–Allen L. Wold

ROBOT ATTACK (Big 5); $15.95 tape, $19.95 disk. Program by Bill Hogue and Jeff Konyu for the 16K TRS-80. One player; playing time 5-10 minutes. Published 1981.

This is Big 5's version of the arcade game ***Berzerk***. You are on a space station held by hostile robots. The walls are electrified and the passages are blocked by robots. You must use your hand-held laser to destroy the robots, and then escape to the next section. Big 5's familiar "flagship" replaces Evil Otto from the arcade game. If you stay too long in a section, the flagship will come to destroy you.

Big 5 has created another excellent arcade game for the TRS-80. Especially notable is voice output through the cassette port. If you leave a section before killing all of the robots, your computer will shout, "Chicken!" Even if you destroy the robots you will be told, "That was pure luck." Several other phrases are used. Another good feature is the option to choose between three possible means of control: two types of keyboard input or a joystick. If you get the disk version, the ten highest scores will be kept on the disk and displayed at the beginning of each game.

My only criticism of this game is that it stays easy too long, then gets difficult too fast. For the first five sections, the robots do not shoot back. This can be boring for an experienced player. After about 10,000 points, which takes approximately 10 minutes, the robots are moving and shooting so fast I find it incredible that anyone could survive.

ROBOT ATTACK gets a high recommendation. It will quickly pay for itself by saving you quarters you are spending at the arcade.

–Bruce Campbell

PUBLICATIONS

THE WARGAMERS ENCYCLOPEDIAC DICTIONARY (American Wargaming Association; c/o George Phillies, 1225 Island no. 204, Ann Arbor MI 48105); $11. Edited by George Phillies. 18 8½" x 11" pages stapled together; small print. Published 1981.

This specialty dictionary is intended to cover the entire gaming hobby. It is designed for munchkins (def: "a young wargamer, generally under 14 or 16 years of age") who don't understand the slang used by grognards (def: "a wargamer who has been in the hobby for a very long time"). Words, abbreviations and phrases are arranged alphabetically with their definitions. Essays are also included on subjects such as boardgaming, role-playing games, and running a convention.

There's a good idea here – many people feel lost when they enter the hobby or try to

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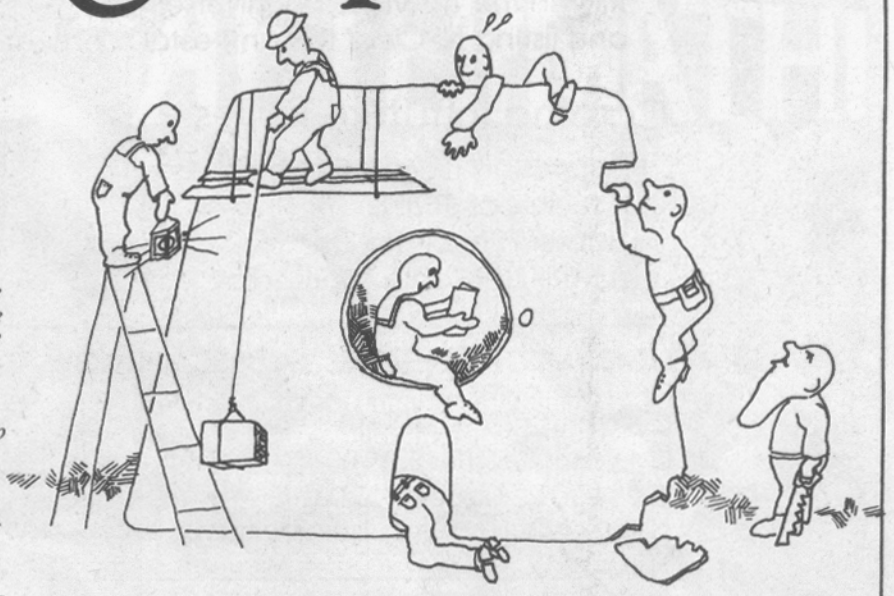

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switch from one part of the hobby to another (for instance, a wargamer trying to read *Alarums & Excursions* without knowing what EHPs and paladins are; or a sci-fi gamer attempting to penetrate *Fire & Movement*'s OBs, POLs and semi-fluid ZOCs). The definitions are written in good English by someone who knows games, and there are few typos.

I have a lot of complaints. Primarily I don't think this dictionary is complete enough to help novices – terms left out include paladin, POL, and all of the various ZOCs. Useless exotic terms are included ("femmefan" = lady gamer), as well as outdated material ("Sparta," a game club that died 10 years ago). Too many terms are listed by weird abbreviations (TFG = Task Force Games). The definitions have inflated vocabularies – any definition of "rail movement" should include the simple word "train." Except for D&D terms, science fiction and fantasy definitions are left out (except for "space gamer" – that's supposed to be the word that describes all of us). For some reason Avalon Hill and TSR are listed as companies while SPI and Metagaming are not. There is an old-fashioned flavor to the definitions of "PBM" (no mention of moderated games) and "graphics" (not a word about computer games). Obscure terms are also in evidence (such as "hex edge" instead of the familiar "hexside").

THE WARGAMERS ENCYCLOPEDIAC DICTIONARY is certainly not going to help some newcomer trying to decipher the slang in TSG; it will be of partial help with wargames, miniatures or D&D. I realize a lot of work was done on this booklet. Unfortunately, I think a better selection of terms and less formalism would have been a vast improvement – I don't recommend it.

– W. G. Armintrout

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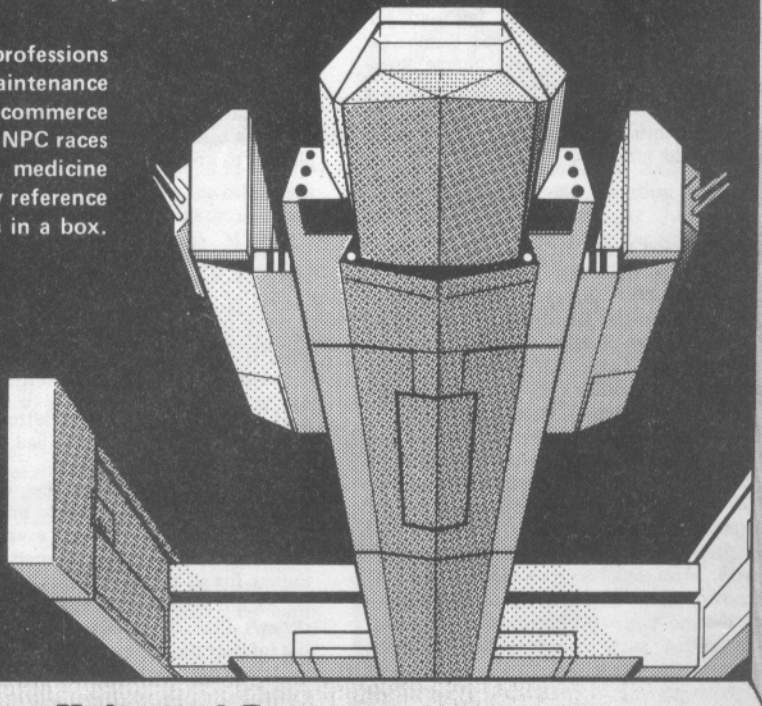

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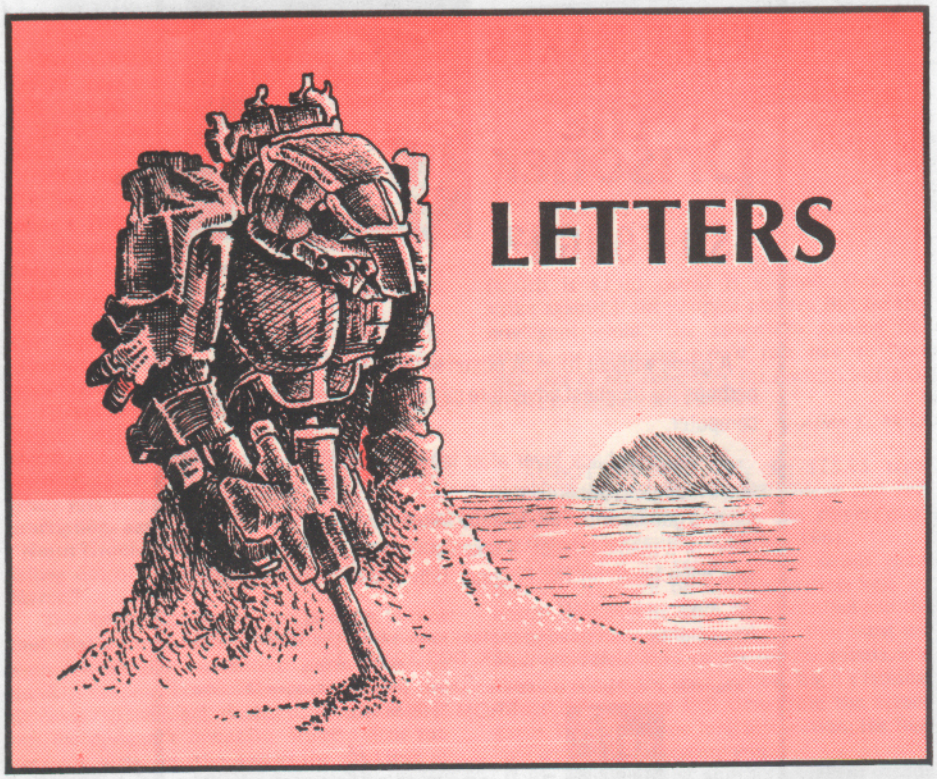


LETTERS

Although I have no objection to Steve Jackson owning both a game company and a game magazine (free enterprise at work!), I do feel that the two should be distinctly separate. The advent of *The Space Gamer*'s hawking Steve Jackson Games in every issue casts a shadow of doubt across the veracity and accuracy of your capsule reviews. A magazine should be like Caesar's wife.

Might I suggest that Steve's magazine treat Steve's game company exactly the same as it treats any other game company. In other words, end the free editorial space praising the latest game product, introduce fair and impartial reporting on Steve Jackson Games (as with any other company), and charge Steve Jackson Games for advertising at the same rate as for any other game company. I guess I'm saying that I miss the only independent game magazine in the industry.

Milo B. Shiff
Theodore, AL

I think Steve made his position on house-organing pretty clear last issue, in the comments of the 1981 Survey. It's easy to level charges of in-house favoritism – especially, say, with this Ogre/G.E.V. issue in hand. But if the two games were still owned by Metagaming, then it wouldn't be house organing. Those two games stand on their own.

Also, it's my duty as editor to made sure that everything sent from my desk to the typesetters is of interest to a significant majority of TSG readers. This furthers your requested impartiality.

As for capsules, most are written by readers with absolutely no connection with SJ Games. In addition, it's been an understood policy that no *game will be reviewed by someone associated with its conception. That includes ours. We work hard to keep our credibility from gapping – but thanks for the concern.*

–AA

I just purchased *The Ogre Book I,* and I have a comment. It has always seemed to me that the Ogre Mark IV is too strong. I have verified this by running a Mark IV at a defense which will stop a Mark V between ½ and 2/3 of the time. Even when I force the Ogre to just stupidly grind ahead, the Mark IV eats it for lunch. The same thing happens when I operate the Mark IV intelligently against a Mark V which is equally intelligently run. The obvious solution to me is to give the Mark IV ten hits per speed factor (for a total of 40) rather than 15 per speed (for a total of 60) as now. That makes it speedy but fragile, which makes it act more like a raider. I am currently trying to evaluate all Ogres in terms of "armor units" so that earlier marks can be used with regular armor and infantry against the later marks. If someone else has already done this, I would be pleased to know it.

John W. Berry
Houston, TX

The conclusions drawn in Tournament Ogre/G.E.V. *tend to differ with yours on the matter of the Mks IV and V. There's plenty of room out there for debate, and we'd like to hear more on it. Comments?*

–AA

I am astonished to see letters complaining that their games were not as bad as TSG reviews had made them out to be.

I don't know about the other "average gamers," but I can't afford to buy every second rate game that comes along even if it does have a few assets. I'm having enough trouble raising money for all the good games!

As a TSG subscriber, I want to read *tough* reviews that single out the masterpieces from the inferior products.

It's a *big* world out here in gameland and I'm counting on *you*! Stamp out those turkeys!

Milton Ironfield II
Santee, CA

Where are the naked elf women!!!

Though I do not think TSG should try to compete with certain other magazines, the quality of the artwork should be maintained. Naked elf women would be a perfect subject for artwork in your magazine. People tired of the virtuous elf-maidens of Tolkien would enjoy it a great deal.

Eldon Faulkner
St. Louis, MO

My April issue of *The Space Gamer* was missing the last few pages of the issue – specifically the Denis Loubet feature of Naked Elf Women. Please send me a new copy of issue 50 including this feature. Or at least extend my subscription by another issue for the foul-up.

Milo B. Shiff
Theodore, AL

Jokes around TSG never end up precisely as intended. I used to type up joke material – fake capsule reviews, ludicrous game variants – and put them in the typesetting basket. Trouble was, they tended to be typeset and published. With our latest effort, the joke, as usual, is on us, as the magazine's readership clamors for the Feature That Was Not To Be. Guess we'll never learn . . .

–AA

If TSG's readers are to have a voice in what goes into the magazine, I think that more input is necessary than what you can get from the survey. (OK, class, how much do you like this thing? How about this thing?) Trouble is, the survey doesn't approach some issues from the right direction. I hope some of this letter will get printed, and that it will stimulate some discussion.

Fiction: Most of it has been pretty bad over the years. You're not a fiction magazine, and shouldn't be. About the only TSG writer ever to provide good quality, highly readable, game-oriented fiction was Brian McCue. His pieces always left one with food for thought, but they were still "about" gaming like good science fiction is "about" science. Recently, Timothy Zahn has given us some quite good game-related pieces, although as good *fiction* they only partially succeed. Fiction that was written expressly to show off some new game idea is often contrived and lacking in originality (as a story, perhaps not as a game idea) and often ends up taking space that could be put to better use. So unless you can get quality like the aforementioned, be wary of even printing fiction.

Art: Good art is always welcome. (But you aren't an art magazine, either.) Primitive and silly stuff can profitably be avoided. Humorous cartoons are sometimes OK, especially on the mailer, but don't get too far afield. (*Murphy's Rules* is good; *The Good Guys* was the pits.)

Capsule reviews are interesting and useful, but you *almost* overdo it. In terms of space, I mean. Ten pages is a lot of little reviews in small type! Your main orientation, and my preference, has always been toward fantasy material. If you were to de-emphasize SF reviews a bit, you might make them a page or two shorter, and then length and content would suit me perfectly. Featured reviews are another story. One or sometimes two an issue is a good ratio, I think.

Contests for traps, characters, etc. are just the sort of thing I like to see in TSG. Crosswords, poetry contests, and that ilk are a waste of space.

Let me finish up while there's still a chance of fitting this into the letters column. First, lots of things will work in the magazine as long as you keep the quality up. Second, since you bought TSG you've broadened its outlook, and that's good. But you've also lost a bit of your sense of the reasons for playing: pleasure, excitement, adventure – and somewhat increased your focus on The Gaming Biz. I'm not doom-crying, or forecasting the end of TSG; I would just like to see a little drift back in the other direction again. I hope you can re-increase your percentage of analysis, variant, and supplement articles. I also enjoy the "game in the magazine" and "supplement in the magazine" ideas you've been presenting lately – just do it only when you have a good one, don't try to keep it up all the time.

Burt McKeon
Rochester, NY

You'll notice that we don't run an adventure supplement or complete game in every issue – much as we'd like to, we just don't get enough good ones. I think you have that request granted.

We won't be de-emphasizing SF anytime in the forseeable future; I like to see a pretty even balance between SF & F in our pages. We've also seen a lot of letters saying, "Need I remind you you're The **Space** *Gamer . . ." With every aye matched by a nay, we have to strike a balance. Some reader reaction on our success (or lack of it) is in order, I think.*

And, yes, we're **always** *looking for good variant and strategy articles. Phil Rennert's* **Tournament Ogre/G.E.V** *this issue is a fine example. But we can't print what we don't have, and we can't write them all ourselves. Readers, take note: this burden is on* **you.**

–AA

First of all, a Platinum Hubcap and crossed AT guns to Aaron Allston for his reworking of Wheels vs. Walkers (aka "Sunday Drivers"). He really did wonders with that half-serious, half-baked scenario I sent in! The new rules should prove useful for many situations. The playtesting runs must have been interesting: Train transformers? Garbage cans? Hmmph.

The featured review of Judges Guild adventures was both informative and amusing. Normally a review this long would be a bit excessive, but because it covered a number of related products, and was also fun to read, it was worth the space.

"Periastron" was interesting, but much too short. Because these folios are so interconnected, it is hard to run them without having all three or four with you.

The interior color was put to good use in issue 50. The Midville map was definitely enhanced, as would a planetary map be in upcoming SF adventures.

Instead of making theme issues on one particular game system, consider making "generic" issues on a particular game type, like a SF role-playing issue instead of a purely ***Traveller*** (or ***Space Opera***, or ***Universe***) issue. Making an adventure usable in all systems would be challenging, but well worth it!

Stefan Jones
Locust Valley, NY

. . . ***Car Wars***! (This is from some friends.) Want more ***Car Wars***!!! We recently played a marathon 19-hour game – 43 cars, 19 motorcycles, and five vans.

James J. Gerbino
Pensacola, FL

TSG 46 has finally arrived in the UK with Bruce Webster's review of *The War Machine*. I can imagine the problems that TSG readers will have in asking their banks to make out a "draft for L9." What you actually do is send a cheque for $40 to Emjay, 17 Langbank Avenue, Nottingham NG5 5BU, England. This covers a 12-issue annual subscription (TWM recently went monthly some time ago) and includes conversion changes at our end (much cheaper than the charge made by a US bank for making out an International Money Order). A six-issue sub is $23.

TWM is a normal magazine, by the way, typeset and with artwork, not a newsletter. Bruce's review was based on Issue 1, published back in July, 1981. Much of the magazine's content concerns game-assistance programs of the kind that Ignazio and Wold were asking for in the same issue of TSG; these are evenly split between SF games, FRP material, and wargame. Types of micro covered are those familiar to US readers – TRS-80s, Apples, Ataris ("Video Genie" is, of course, the UK name for the PMC-80).

Mike Costello
Nottingham, England

Got your new book (*The Ogre Book*) Friday. Are the map shots on pages 23 and 24 the new map? Nice. Hope I get to see it in color within my lifetime. *Iron Mountain* was designed during the first-edition ***Ogre*** era. Have you playtested it with the new unit values? M4/3 GEVs instead of M4/4s makes quite a difference. Likewise M3 HVYs instead of M2s. Maybe you find that these two changes balance each other out. I haven't tried it enough times to *really* determine for sure, but the Ogre hasn't lost yet. Another suggested rule modification – allow infantry to enter mountain hexes (cost 2 MP, +1 to defense) and cross slope hexsides at a 1MP cost.

Continental Siege Aircraft – I had this article once before, but it was supposedly mistaken for a canine chew toy. Some ideas on making this a bit more compatible with the rest of the system – maybe you've heard some of this before, I'm not sure. Fighters at M6: I figured out this speed once, and, though I don't remember the exact answer, it was awfully slow (135 kph, using ***G.E.V.*** scale) for jet aircraft. Change movement to M6(5)/6(5) (270 kph-225 kph) for fighters, M5/5 for bombers, with facing changes at the end of each movement phase; or, if you want them to be really tough to maneuver, at the end of one M phase or the other, but not both. As for CSA movement – not sure how it should (or if it would) work. M3 seems too slow to keep them in the air, unless one assumes that some of the engine thrust is directed down (V/STOL CSAs?). As for the attack multiples, it seems strange that infantry, especially Ogre-era infantry, can't counterattack strafing fighters at all, ditto armor units. A possible answer would be to allow "simultaneous" return fire by any ground units attacked or within range, maybe at half strength. Howitzers half-strength vs aircraft? I may be mistaken, but isn't the main difference between WWII Germany's 88mm flak gun and their 88MM anti-tank gun pretty much just where you point it and which shell you put in it? I'd give howitzers (and possibly tanks) full attack strength, but maybe 1 or 2 hexes less range (since they have to fire up as well as out). And AA units: From what (admittedly limited) knowledge of the flakpanzers I have, I seem to remember that they were *very* effective against infantry. If an AA unit is a flak-firing unit, its attack strength vs infantry should not be halved, though I can see halving it vs armor units. On the other hand, if AA units are assumed to be laser-firing (i.e., maybe the immobile ones), it could be very effective against armor, assuming a clear line of sight/fire, but not so effective vs. many small targets (infantry): may attack only one squad at a time and/or at half-strength.

In summary – fine book. Register my vote in favor of volume II. And III. and expansion sets. And a quick and just settlement on the latest legal hassle. May it be the last.

Ben V. Kloepper
St. Louis, MO

I gave up D&D when the rules and cost explosions made it easy. But I was just about ready, having realized that the majority of dungeon crawlers miss the most fun to be had from role-playing.

True role-playing is impossible without some kind of ground from which to operate. It demands emotional envolvement. Here we run into the interesting relation of improving our fantasies through an understanding of our daily lives.

For instance, due to the way we view real violence, few of us have the emotional equipment to really enjoy a hack-and-burn run per se. (Tho' Genghis Khan could probably be brought to tears . . .)

I count C&S and ***Traveller*** successful because they deal in the raw stuff of the lives of each of us. "There is no free lunch," or "Pay the bills or starve," we can care about because we have felt what they mean. Martin Oak (my favorite ***Traveller*** character) has several recent dents in his hide, not because he goes looking for thrills – a long and illustrious career in the Imperial Navy took care of *that* dangerous hobby – but because his travelling companion (an empathic, ex-mascot lynx named Z.F. Spacecat) has a serious talent for finding trouble. Most gamers would have had cat casserole the first night, but I enjoy it because I can relate it to my own unreasoning affection for a querulous old tomcat of the same name. Re sult: I have more fun and so do my GMs and fellow players.

This is not something which can be done by rules or by GMs. Each player must do it himself. Game systems and GMs can only help. Fortunately, the gaming media are getting the idea. . . .

I usually oppose fiction in a 'zine because for many good reasons the fiction is rarely worth reading. But real literature such as the *outstanding* "End Game" by J.D. Bell *can* provide us with a bridge to the emotional side so necessary to true role-playing.

I am particularly interested in computer gaming with reference to home systems and to the home-access terminals. "Deus Ex Machina" is the best column of its type, but someone could pull a real coup by contracting for a professional analysis of the requirements of these systems (probably in the form of a critical-path analysis).

Dennis M. Forcier
Dallas, TX

Just read TSG 50. Great idea to buy up the whole field; stroke of genius! Need a good place to start? Have I got a PBM game for you . . .

W. Elmer Hinton, Jr.
Lords of Valetia

GAME MASTER

GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will be first referred to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry – no individual replies are possible.

Stellar Conquest

1. Rule 7.2.9 states that a planet can be rendered uninhabitable by burning 10 million inhabitants. If there are more than 10 million population on a planet, are all the people and industry considered destroyed immediately after the 10 million are burned?

2. Is it possible to render a planet uninhabitable, even if there are less than 10 million people there? If so, would this be done by burning all the population there present, or by attacking with enough force to destroy 10 million if they had been present?

3. Are players allowed to burn their own planets? If so, would it be a reasonable variant to rule that if you burn your own population, any of your colonies that are later conquered by an enemy who himself is guiltless of acts of genocide, will not revolt against the new ruler if left unsupervised by a warship?

4. When during the production year is the population incrementation received?

Example: A TR planet with 40 million population on turn 15, would have a population growth of 8 million on turn 16. Would the controlling player have 40 IUs or 48 IUs to spend on turn 16?

Example: 20 CTs arrive on a TR planet during the movement phase of turn 20. Would they get any population incrementation on turn 20? Would they get any IUs to spend on turn 20? If so, how many: 20 or 24?

5. Rule 5.4.6 states that a ship may not have for its destination the system from whence it came. Does that mean that a ship which, on turn 5 was on system X and on turn 6, system Y, may not have system X for its destination on turn 7? Or does it mean that a ship in system X cannot have system X as its destination?

6. Rule 5.4.8 states that if neither player has any warships on the same star, the player arriving with his non-warships second must depart. Will the player who arrived last get any information about the planets in the system, or the colonies thereon? Also, if a warship is present when another player's ship arrives in a star system, will the last arriving player have to survive the battle to find out anything about the system, or will he know what type of planets are present but nothing about the colony until he wins control of the contested system?

7. May a player send his CTs from planet X to Y back to X, or from X to Y to Z back to X to get the emigration bonus?

8. When rule 8.4.2 states that: "The Basic Industrial Unit(s) for Bonus Population is not 'paid' for, but its Colony Transport(s) must be bought," does that mean that if you pay for the CTs for the bonus population, that they come fully accoutered with their one million population and one IU each? Or that, in addition to buying the CTs, one has to buy the IUs that are to be shipped off with the emigrants?

9. If a group of 10 CTs travelling as one unit arrive at a previously unexplored star unescorted, does the owning player make one die roll or 10?

10. Is it legitimate to feign the risk roll for exploration? Specifically, could a player, exploring with an ESC, roll a die as he would if it were an unescorted scout and then ignore the result if it were a 1? As a corollary of this, could a player roll a die more times than he had ships, ignoring all but the correct number of rolls in order to confuse his opponents as to the true number and type of craft at any one star?

11. What is a 1 BO type open galactic star cluster?

12. May a player emigrate a conquered colony's population and then destroy the CTs without them having a chance to escape?

Example: A player puts a conquered colony into CTs in the conquered system, then destroys them there.

Example: A player is escorting CTs of a conquered population and is met at his destination by enemy warships, could he shoot his CTs then, or have them commit suicide by driving them into the star or crashing them on the planet? If you wanted to deliberately crash ships on a planet, could you suggest possible amounts of damage each type would do?

13. What happens when a player catches enemy CTs in orbit unescorted or destroys the escorting warships on the first combat phase? Are they immediately considered conquered? Do they get a chance to flee? Do they get to land on a planet in the system? Commit suicide?

14. Is it permissible to mix populations from two different conquered planets?

15. When a player conquers an enemy colony, does that player also get possession of any R&D that has been done or is being done by the conquered player? If not, would it be reasonable to play that if you conquer a planet with technology which you don't already have, you would get a reduction in the IU cost of the R&D; for instance: A reduction equal to the saving you would have incurred if you had done the predecessor development?

16. When a player reconquers one of his own planets that has been previously conquered by an enemy and then used to conduct R&D for new technology, would the reconquerer be able to use the new knowledge?

17. When conducting R&D in ship movement allowance, is the preceding development defined as the step immediately below or just the level below?

Example: Would the R&D cost of 5 MA cost 40 or the full 55 IUs if a player had the technology for 3 MA, which would be the preceding technology level, but not the preceding movement?

18. Rule 4.3 states that: ". . . a player may examine another player's ship counters if he has a ship or colonized planet occupying the same star hex as that opponent's ships." Does this mean that if a player loses a populated planet to an opponent, he may still gather intelligence concerning the strength of the occupying forces?

19. Do you know of any diplomacy or negotiation rules for ***Stellar Conquest***?

20. 4.3 states that if neither player has warships in the star hex, the last arriving ships must depart. Does that mean if you send a scout to a system where an opponent has a colony but no warships you must depart anyway?

21. 4.2 says that no details are given about colonies during phase 4.2. When are the details given?

22. If a planet has a planetary force screen, does the owning player have to give any details about the colony apart from the fact that it has a PFS?

23. Is a planet with a planetary force screen considered unbesiegable? Can a planet with a PFS build ships during production year?

24. If you do research for a high-level technology, do you automatically get the lower level as well?

Example: If you complete R&D on DNs, can you also build ATKs later if you did not specifically do R&D on ATKs, or build MBs if you have only researched AMBs?

25. What would be the R&D cost for RIU if you had AIT but not IIT: 85, or the full 100?

26. May a ship's destination be changed before it reaches destination?

Example: A scout with orders to go to system X passes through system Y on route. May it have its orders changed while passing through Y and never go on to its original destination? May it do exploration while on Y if the controlling player has ordered it to another destination and is only passing through Y?

27. Is it permissible to attempt to mislead uninvolved opponents when conducting battles?

Example: Player 1, in ship-to-ship combat with player 2, in an attempt to mislead players 3 and 4, shouts exultantly, "Eat my dreadnaughts, you mother!" when all he has is a couple of escorts.

Or, could players roll more dice than is necessary, ignoring the superfluous ones? Or, in other times, make announcements which he knows to be false?

Example: "OK, it 's your turn as soon as I write down my colony population," when, in fact, he has landed no colonies that turn and has no CTs in transit.

28. It strikes me that ***Stellar Conquest*** gives players many opportunities and temptations to cheat. Do you have any suggestions as to how to prevent or spot this other than to have a non-playing ref?

29. Is it possible to emigrate a conquered colony on the same turn as you bring in your own colonists?

Example: After conquering an enemy colony on turn 6, a player wants to emigrate them all on turn 12 and, on the same turn, bring in his own immigrants. Also, would he get the full number of IUs to spend on that turn for the conquered colonists as well as the IUs for the new immigrants?

30. When conducting R&D, is the previous technology level mandatory?

Example: In order to research 8 MA, a level three technology, do you have to have at least 5 MA or 6 MA? Or is it possible to start research on 8 MA if you only have 3 MA?

31. Is research in another sequence allowable as a previous technology?

Example: Could a player research 8 MA right after 3 MA if he had DN technology, which is level two but under weapons systems?

32. I read an article which mentioned "Super Missile Bases." What would be their cost and effect?

33. I have come up with what I think is an interesting variant: Orbiting Missile Bases. They would not show up on the map, their records being a part of a colony's records. They would,

however, defend/attack like spaceships, in that they would fire during the ship-to-ship combat phase and would have to be destroyed before planetary conquest phase would take place, and would make besieging a system impossible until their destruction. Suggested costs are:

Level 1: Orbiting Missile Base; equivalent to an Escort warship which is incapable of extra-system space flight. Each costs 5 IUs after the research cost of 27 IUs has been paid.

Level 2: Orbiting Advanced Missile Base; equivalent to an Attack warship. Each costs 12 IUs after the research cost of 45 IUs with pred. or 60 IUs without pred. has been paid.

Level 3: Orbiting Super Missile Base; equivalent to a Dreadnaught warship. Each costs 25 IUs after the research cost of 80 IUs with pred. or 95 IUs without pred. has been paid.

Their chief advantage is that they are invisible until "too late." The owner should be able to bag a few ships before his opponents know to avoid the system in question.

If a player also possesses RIU, he could, at his discretion, make the bases robotic which, were he to build them in a system, he could later leave behind to do their work. I would also allow a player to make his non-orbiting bases robotic if he had RIU.

34. During what phase of the turn does the range limit take effect on a player's ships?

Example: A player on turn 12 has a task force 7 hexes from his nearest colony. On turn 13, he moves 3 hexes to land 10 CTs on a planet. During part of the turn he was in violation of his range limit. Is this against the rules?

Example: A player attacks two different enemy systems in the same turn. He chooses to fight in system X first. He is victorious and X is now a conquered system. In system Y, his opponent is now in violation of his range limit. Are they removed before they fight?

Example: Situation as above, but this time the colony is system Z has a missile base which is destroyed during the planetary conquest phase of the turn. Will the penalty for range violation not come into effect until after all ship-to-ship combat is completed?

Example: At the beginning of the game, a player finds no planets to his liking. May he continue to move his ships more than 8 hexes from his entry hex and not observe the ship range limit until he establishes his first colony?

—Byron Godfrey

(No reply received from Metagaming.)

1. You have misread the rule. It says, "If a colonized planet's population **consisting of 10 million or more colonists** *has been destroyed... that planet is rendered uninhabitable..." (emphasis ours). The answer, therefore, is no.*

2. A strict interpretation of rule 7.2.9 would lead to an answer of no. It would be reasonable, however, to allow a planet to be rendered uninhabitable by firing 10 million deaths' worth of shots at it; the effect of the weapons on the planet would, logically, not be different just because they struck empty fields instead of cities.

3. Rule 7.2.8 only mentions destruction of conquered colonies. If the suggestion in (2) above is implemented, there is no need to destroy friendly colonies. If you want to, though, and all players agree, it could be permitted; it would be physically possible if your warship crews are disciplined (and heartless) enough.

Your suggested variation makes sense. It would make just as much sense to say that, if you destroy your own colonies, any colony of your own left unsupervised by a warship will revolt, go neutral, and fail to produce!

4. According to the rules, population growth comes after production. In your first example, the controlling player would have 40 IUs on turn 16. In your second example, the 20 new population would build with 20 IUs on that turn; at the end of the turn the population would be 24. This rule is widely ignored, because a "fetal production" game (where the babies march to the factory and start work as soon as they are born) moves faster. Play that way if you like – but make sure you are all playing the same rules!

5. A ship cannot leave system X and return to it without going elsewhere; it may not be given "fly in a circle" orders. But it is legal to go from one system to another, and then back to the first one.

6. The rules are not clear. The way I have always played it (including games with the designer) allows the second player to roll for exploration risk and, if he survived, learn about the system and colonies – but he would then have to pull his ships off.

7. No. To get the emigration bonus, the ships must land on another planet.

8. To get an increment of Bonus Population, you must pay for a CT. That is the only cost. When the CT lands, its million people (like any other) will be worth one IU per production year.

9. Ten die rolls, one for each ship.

10. I have often seen this done. Strictly speaking, though, it is "negotiation," since it spreads false information. If all players are perfectly honest, then risk rolls should be entirely secret.

11. An "open cluster" is a group of several dozen to several hundred stars having no dense center (as opposed to a globular cluster, which has many thousands of stars and a dense center). My astronomy texts do not mention any "Type 1 BO" cluster; this may be a mistaken identification, since "B" and "O" are terms for star types and are used to identify **associations** *of stars (something entirely different).*

12. Logically, they could be destroyed this way . . . either by attacks or by suicide. A colony ship, though large, would not be likely to do significant damage in striking a planet, and a sun would not even notice it.

13. Enemy CTs caught in orbit would be legitimate targets on the first fire round; after that, they could flee into space. They could not land. The rules do not cover suicide explicitly, but the owning player could have them flee and then deliberately move them beyond the 8-hex range, dooming them.

14. Populations could be mixed if and only if they originally belonged to the same player.

15. The **Stellar Conquest** *rules make absolutely no provision for "capturing" technology. You have to develop technology yourself. The rules you suggest are reasonable, but would definitely represent a variant game!*

16. As above. Unless you change the rules, the reconquerer has no access to any of the new knowledge. "Duhhh . . . no, sir, we didn't understand what the Reddies were doing . . . they said build it, and we did."

17. Refer to the SHIP MA SEQUENCE: It clearly states that the predecessor is the **step** *below, not the level below. In your example, 5 MA would cost the full 55 IUs.*

18. No. If you lose a populated planet, it is no longer "yours" and may not gather intelligence of any kind.

19. The only rules I know of are those in Sections 11 and 12. Section 11 forbids it entirely; Section 12 (3rd edition) offers an alternative: players may negotiate freely if and only if their ships are on the same star hex, and negotiation is limited to the first part of each player turn, before other activity.

20. If the opponent has any ships at all orbiting the colony, you must leave. If he has a colony but no ships at all, you may stay.

21. If a colony is attacked, the enemy must be told whether there is a PFS. If there is no PFS, he must be told how many missile bases, and of what kind, are present. No other information about a colony is given unless and until the colony is captured; then all data about population, IUs, and RIUs is given. If the colony was originally property of another player, reveal that at this time.

22. See 21, above.

23. Nowhere in the rules is it implied that a PFS makes a planet **unbesiegeable**; *it is simply unconquerable. A planet with a PFS* **can** *build ships – unless it happens to be besieged!*

24. Absolutely not! If you research DN before ATK, you cannot build ATK unless you go back and pay the full cost.

25. The designer once told me this is a typographical error, but it seems to have made it all the way into the third printing . . . the predecessor for IIT is supposed to be AIT, not IIT. If you only have IIT, the cost for RIU development is 100.

26. Yes. Section 5.4.4 specifically allows this.

27. Technically, this is negotiation; if you are playing "by the book," it is not allowed.

28. Careful vetting of record sheets after a game will discourage casual cheaters. Even that is no defense against the notorious Task Force Switcher, though. If somebody cheats, quit playing with him! Basically, **Stellar Conquest** *is almost unpoliceable, even WITH a referee.*

29. Yes, you can remove the captured population.

This is not clear. I would allow it, with the proviso that the captured population's IUs could be spent only to produce the CTs they would leave in!

30. The rules are very clear on this; the previous tech level is mandatory.

31. Again, the rules are very clear; you must have the preceding level in the **appropriate** *technology. Level 2 weapons technology is no help in getting Level 3 communications technology.*

32. The Super Missile Base is a variant unit introduced by Avery Goodman in an article in TSG issue 4, back in 1976. Its predecessor was listed as AIT, but this makes little sense; AMB would be a better predecessor. Cost to develop was given as 70 IU with pred, or 85 without; unit cost was 30 IU (10 cheaper than a DN). Using SMBs does not seem to interfere with the normal flow of a game, and allows you to get some "bigger guns" planetside.

33. Looks good.

34. In your first example, the ships deliberately moved out of range, and are forfeit. In the second example, the enemy ships could fight, but would then be technically lost unless they captured the world and got a colony. Alternatively (and this answers your third example) I have usually played with the assumption that ships suddenly cut off by conquest of a "stepping stone" colony must immediately head for the nearest friendly colony; if they are en route to a star, they reach that star and (unless they can establish a colony there) turn around.

Your fourth example represents a violation of the rules; don't do it unless all players agree. Given that agreement, it would make perfect sense to assume that all players originally enter the system in Long Range CTs which have no range limit. They may go any distance before setting down, but are dismantled upon planetfall and cannot be reconstructed (too complex).

—Steve Jackson

PBM Update

PBM Update reports on professionally-moderated play-by-mail games. Notices are monthly. Copy deadline is 60 days previous to the first of the month, for the issue in which the notice is to appear. (Deadline for the August issue is June 1.) All copy should be typed and double-spaced. Notices should not exceed 200 words in length. TSG reserves the right to edit copy as necessary.

UNIVERSE III (Central Texas Computing)

Game News:

Quadrant V. Rumors of Regajian aggression continue to circulate. Four more starships have been destroyed by rogue Terrans, and captains from the major alliances have organized to combat this piracy.

Quadrant VI. The Muar Enclave is apparently undergoing a massive attack by the Alar, who seem determined to annex the entire enclave. Several Terran captains have established colonies on outlying planets.

Quadrant VII. Four new civilized systems have been discovered by the Terrans. Exploration of this quadrant is still sketchy at best.

Quadrant VIII. This quadrant should be open by mid-July, with Quadrants IX and X to follow.

David Bolduc

TRAJAN'S TREACHEROUS TRAP (Flying Buffalo, Inc.)

Game News:

Michael Putch of Tuscon, Arizona, is the first player to find the second level. In over a year and a half of play, Michael is the only person to exit the first level safely. (There is a prize for getting all the way out of the third level alive.)

HEROIC FANTASY (Flying Buffalo, Inc.)

Game News:

Chuck Gaydos is the first person to have a character killed. Two of his party members (Stilts and Stinky, both male fairy fighters) were killed while on scouting missions in the first turn of the game!

Rick Loomis

UNIVERSE II (Clemens & Associates)

Game News:

Quadrant I. The final outcome of the conflict in the Mufrid-Diadem corridor is uncertain. Many ships have been lost on both sides. Colonies have been stripped to provide crews for additional battlecruisers and reinforcements sent from all areas of the quadrant, but neither side seems able to tip the balance.

Quadrant II. The devastation caused by the Phalanx in its attack on the Shikasta complex has caused concern in all colonies. No one has been able to damage the Phalanx even when vast quantities of torpedoes are used.

Quadrant III. Major victories are claimed against the Muar outposts. The attackers are finding, however, that Muar Raiders are rebuilding bases unless the star system is garrisoned.

Quadrant IV. The Unity Alliance invasion of the Regajian Empire has swept over several Regajian bases. Unless the Empire receives aid from Quadrant I, Unity may soon control the area.

Regajian Empire. Until forces can be shifted to Quadrant IV we are avenging our losses by chasing the Unity and ICP bandits in Quadrant I back to ther colonies and destroying them whenever caught. Within the near future the Regajian Empire should encompass twice the area that it originally contained.

Ixtli Empire. Discussions have been held to investigate the possibility of the growing Ixtli fleet assisting the ICP in its battle with the Regajians. The Ixtli starships are weighing the benefits against the risks.

Muar Empire. While our bases in Quadrant III have been barely holding on under heavy attack, the Muar Empire in Quadrant IV continues to grow in strength. A call for volunteers to go to Quadrant III has been sent out.

Jon Clemens

BEYOND THE STELLAR EMPIRE (Adventures By Mail)

Company News:

On May 1st we will have added a fourth GM for BSE. Programming and development continue on our second game, which will be moderated entirely by computer.

Game News:

There have been a few battles over Fairway in the Bluecrab system, involving the new SSL colony Synnax, IAN Johnny Reb, IAN Stargazer, GTT Spacescourge, and SSL Kalgan.

However, between 15 and 25 battles have occurred in a three-week stretch at the planet Teran-Zei in the Newbian system. First, the FET colony Fewlo was invaded and captured after three battles by forces from the (now) IND Helena, IND Diana, SMS Unholy Reaver, SMS Silverstreak, SSL Nova2, SSL Nova1, QFP Tiny Wonder, GTT Nebula, and GTT Farluck's Folly. Second, a fleet of 12 ships entered Teran-Zei's orbit and proceeded to destroy or cripple the IND Seventh, FET Titan, FET Gomorra Express, and FET Sodom's Glory. The three FET ships were bringing ground forces and were not equipped for a space battle.

The blockading force continues to have success. One of its members left to get resupplied with missiles, but five others arrived to fill in, increasing the blockading force to 16 ships. The invaders, in groups of one, two, or three, left or arrived with supplies, causing their ships and Fewlo to have half a dozen battles with the 16 orbiting ships. This resulted in ten of the 16 ships being either crippled or destroyed, and Fewlo having one quadrant completely destroyed with its other main quadrant reduced significantly. More FET ships arrived and attempted to run the blockade . . . and survived, which enabled them to supply the FET ground force, which was close to starvation. The six surviving ships from the orbital blockade and the invaders of Fewlo have all been FET posted.

The SSL announced that it has begun construction of a new colony, named Greyheath on Stormgate-4, and the GTT system has begun construction of a colony on Yule in the Krakki system.

WCE stock prices continue to rise dramatically, due to heavy trading; FET stock prices continue to decline due to the Fewlo situation.

Finally, the Emperor Justin I instituted a new Imperial Law, which gives ownership of a world to a colony that has existed on that world for at least 26 weeks.

Jack B. Everitt

THE TRIBES OF CRANE (Schubel & Son)

Company News:

Planned release date of our new grand scale space adventure entitled ***Star Venture*** is June 1, 1982.

Rules Clarification:

We would like to review a few abbreviations used by our gamemasters:

CATS – Catapults
EWS – Equivalent warrior strength
Adds – Combat advantages as a percentage gain or loss
Moadj – Monthly adjustments
GU – Grand Union
DU – Dark Union
BT – Blood Trust
FM – First Merchant
HKL – High Kinglord

Game News:

The Dark Union has been using a new and effective siege tactic. Before a major siege is attempted, a small force will make an attack on the walls of the city to determine the strength of the defenses. The battle information and reports from spies within the city have been very effective in determining the strengths and weaknesses of the city defenses. This had allowed for excellent siege planning. This tactic seems to be the result of a lesson learned at the Columbine, when inadequate reporting on Columbine's unconvential construction resulted in a major defeat for Dark Union siege forces.

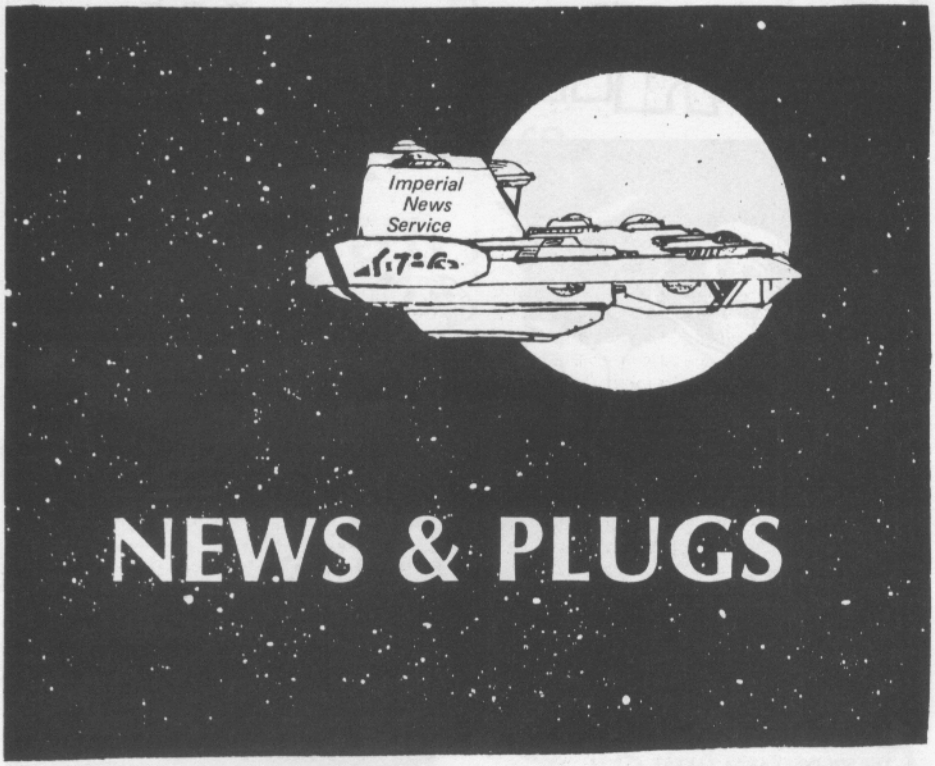
On Crane II, the city of Call has succeeded in holding off a powerful siege by the Northern Clan Alliance. The city leader, Asterix, has proven himself to be an excellent tactician. His rapid assault on the Clanthor People as they arrived before Call brought him enough time to gather his allies and may have saved the city.

STARMASTER (Schubel & Son)

Game News:

Both the Central and Northeast Galaxies have seen a sudden increase in the activities of the vicious Illian Swarm. The Swarm is the most dangerous adversary in the universe; they consider all creatures with blood a source of food. It has been reported that many Swarm stasis fleets are made of six warships escorting six transports to be used to pick up captives to keep the squadron well-fed. Many solar empires have begun uniting in an attempt to destroy the Swarm menace before they strike the less defended colonies. The constant conflict between the solar empires works to the Swarm's advantage by preventing a combined hunt-and-destroy mission from being launched.

George V. Schubel



NEWS & PLUGS

New & Upcoming Releases:

Automated Simulations has released two more expansions for its Epyx line. ***Danger in Drindisti*** is an expansion for ***Hellfire Warrior,*** available for the Apple and TRS-80. ***Curse of Ra*** is an expansion for ***Temple of Apshai,*** available for the Apple, TRS-80, IBM, and Atari.

Hero Games plans to release its ***Champions II*** rules supplement this summer.

FASA's big offering for Origins '82 will be ***Behind Enemy Lines,*** an RPG of "daring missions in WWII." The first adventure release for this RPG will be a ***Guns of Navarone*** scenario licensed from Columbia Pictures.

Conflict Simulations Games in Australia plans to begin publication of a gaming magazine very similar in scope to TSG. For information, contact Conflict Simulations Games, 48 Beauchamp St., Deakin 2600, ACT, Australia.

Yaquinto has released two RPGs. ***Man, Myth, & Magic*** is set during the height of the Roman Empire; ***Pirates & Plunder*** deals with the "golden age of piracy." Both games retail for $19.

FGU plans to reenter the now hotly-contested field of superhero RPGs with a revised and updated ***Villains & Vigilantes.*** The new edition will be boxed. FGU's newest RPG is ***Merc,*** a game of contemporary mercenaries.

SSI has announced two more wargames for the Atari. ***The Battle of Shiloh*** deals with that Civil War clash; ***Tigers in the Snow*** simulates the German offensive of December, 1944. Both games are $39.95.

TSR is advertising two new RPGs: ***Gangbusters*** deals with the era of Elliott Ness; ***Star Frontiers*** is (what else?) science fiction role-playing. A new approach from TSR is their upcoming Endless Quest™ series, which is a line of D&D adventure scenario paperback books, apparently a sort of ***Interactive Fantasies*** in paperback.

Eight members of the SPI design staff have left that company to work for Avalon Hill. AH plans to set them up as a separate design group named Victory Games. The staffers leaving for the new company are Mark Herman, Jerry Klug, John and Trish Butterfield, Eric Lee Smith, Ted Koller, Bob Ryer, and Jerry Glichenhouse.

This coup by Avalon Hill follows hard on the heels of TSR's recent acquisition of SPI. For more details on this story, see the May-June issue (27) of our sister magazine, *Fire & Movement.*

★★★

According to reports, Group One, publisher of ***Traveller*** adventures, has folded. Observers cite large numbers of distributor returns as a major cause of the collapse. The existing inventory will be sold off.

★★★

Task Force has announced that its impending ***Star Fleet Command*** computer game has been shelved due to circumstances beyond their control.

★★★

Metro Detroit has received Avalon Hill's award for "contributions toward advancement and preservation of Adventure Gaming."

★★★

The May issue of the *SF Chronicle* confirms that TSR Hobbies has purchased *Amazing Stories,* an SF&F fiction magazine. George Scithers, former editor for *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine,* is now editor for *Amazing,* and a vice president of TSR.

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ENTER NOW GSI PO Box 430587 Miami, Florida 33143 THE SAGA HAS BEGUN...

Calendar

*June 4-6: DALCON 82. Wargaming con: AD&D, Ogre/GEV, Squad Leader, etc. Contact @ Richland College, 12800 Abrams Rd., Dallas, TX 75234.

June 4-6: GENGHIS CON IV. Adventure gaming, boardgames, computer games, miniatures. Contact David A. Bottger, P.O. Box 2945, Littleton, CO 80161.

*June 10-13: FANTASY FAIR. Comics, SF&F, wargaming. Contact @ 1206 Atlanta Dr., Garland, TX 75041, or call Larry Lankford @ 214-369-4437.

June 11-13: MICHICON. To be held in Detroit. Contact @ P.O. Box 787, Troy, MI 48099.

June 18-20: HOUSTONCON '82. Nostalgia, SF&F. Contact L-5 Society, P.O. Box 713, Stafford, TX 77477-0713.

June 18-20: SF CON V (formerly CONEBULUS). Science fiction con with wargaming. Contact @ 337 Hartford Rd., Syracuse, NY 13208.

July 2-4: NANCON 88-V. Gaming con. Send SASE c/o Nan's Game Headquarters, 118 Briargrove Center, 6100 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77057.

July 9-11: ATLANTA WARGAMING CONVENTION. FRP, boardgaming, Squad Leader. Send SASE to A.S.G.A.R.D., P.O. Box 90952, East Point, GA 30364.

*July 16-18: OKON. SF&F and wargaming. Contact @ P.O. Box 4229, Tulsa, OK 74104.

*July 23-25: ORIGINS '82. Adventure gaming convention. Write to Origins 82, P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220, or call 301-539-4634.

July 24-25: KOMMAND CON 82. Wargaming con. Contact @ Kommander's Wargaming Club, P.O. Box 2235, Mansfield, OH 44905.

*August 6-8: TEXCON 1982. D&D, Car Wars, etc. For more information, send SASE to TexCon 1982, 8028 Gessner No. 1805, Austin, TX 78573.

August 7-8: BANGOR AREA WARGAMERS CONVENTION. Send SASE for information to Edward F. Stevens, Jr., 32 Masonic St., Rockland, ME 04841, or phone 207-596-0338.

*August 19-22: GENCON XV. Wargaming convention. Contact @ P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

*September 2-6: CHICON IV, aka WORLDCON. World SF convention. Contact @ P.O. Box A3120, Chicago, IL 60690.

September 4-6: PACIFICON. Gaming convention. Contact @ P.O. Box 5548, San Jose, CA 95150.

September 24-26: BABEL CONFERENCE '82. SF&F, comics, wargaming. Contact c/o Dave Marshall, 1160 36th St. SW, Wyoming, MI 49509.

October 1-3: ARMADILLOCON 4. SF convention. Contact c/o Robert Taylor, P.O. Box 9612 NW Station, Austin, TX 78766.

SJ GAMES and TSG will be attending the conventions marked above with asterisks.

CONVENTION ORGANIZERS – let us know about your con! Free publicity never hurts.

MURPHY'S RULES
DIAPERS AND DRAGONS?
In Original D&D, you could have a player-character balrog, as long as you started with a "young" one.
WE WILL FIGHT THEM ON THE TABLES, WE WILL FIGHT THEM ON THE SOFAS . . .
In Battle of Britain, players must keep individual track of every airplane that fought in the battle.
Joseph Miranda
THE ENGINES CANNA TAKE IT, CAP'N!
The Federation Space designer's notes mention that "The movement factors exceed the maximum speed of any ship (as given in Star Fleet Battles) by a considerable margin. This is because even at its emergency speed of Warp Seven, it would take the Federation's heavy cruiser over 50 years to reach the Klingon border!"
THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR
In Car Wars, a character cannot commit suicide with a .44 magnum. Heavy handguns do two points of damage, which will knock someone unconscious. And if he's unconscious, the distraught soul can't try again . . .

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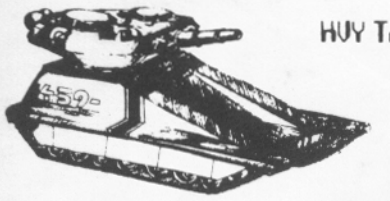
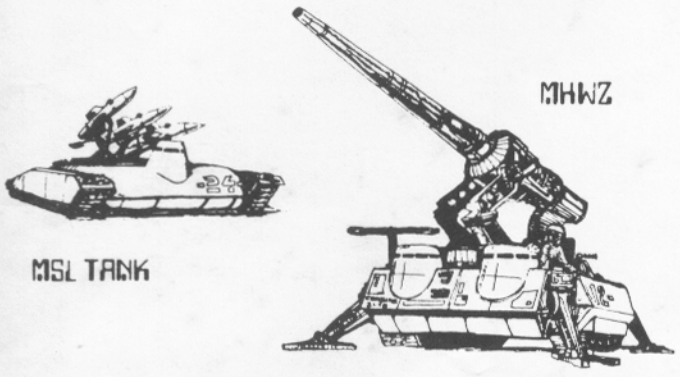
Seems we made a couple of errors in last issue's advertising. Hero Games' address is actually 425 Harbor Blvd., Suite A, *not* 25 Belmont; and S.R. Jones' P.O. Box is 4174, not 1471 as noted.

OGRE MINIATURES





When the OGRE miniatures first appeared, they won the Charles Roberts Award for "best vehicular miniatures." Now they're available again – with many new units.

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THE OGRE BOOK

The name tells it all. This is a book about OGRE – and, of course, G.E.V. We've collected the best articles from the early issues of ***The Space Gamer*** *(many now out of print) . . . playtested them further and updated them where necessary . . . and put them all in one book. Titles include "Playing the Odds in Ogre/G.E.V.," "The Four-Howitzer Defense," "Iron Mountain," "Adding Fear and Loathing to G.E.V.," and many others . . . including the original designer's notes for both games. Whether you want to polish up your game before the next convention, or just try out the variants at home, you'll enjoy* ***The Ogre Book.***

SCENARIOS
VARIANTS
STRATEGY
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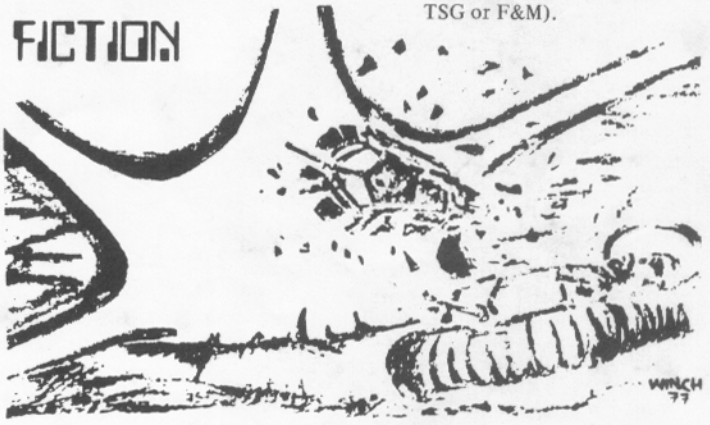
NEW UNITS
FICTION

THE OGRE BOOK is $5.00 at your local game store. To order from SJ Games, add 50 cents postage and handling (unless you're a subscriber to TSG or F&M).



The best-selling sequel to OGRE . . .

G.E.V.

In the year 2085, a tank duel lasts only seconds. An entire battle can end in a few minutes. Nuke-firing infantrymen dodge across the battleground in powered suits, trying to come to grips with the enemy armor. And those armor units, both tanks and hovercraft, are deadly. Only a direct hit will take one out . . . a miss may stun the crew, but their machine will keep trying to kill you.

G.E.V., sequel to OGRE, adds more detail to this fast-moving simulation of armored combat in the next century. G.E.V. stands by itself – but it is totally compatible with OGRE. Stacking and terrain rules, new unit types, the Mark IV Ogre, and more . . . Scenarios include Raid, Breakthrough, Ceasefire Collapse, and The Train. And within hours, you'll be inventing your own.

Since its publication, G.E.V. has ranked among the top science fiction games in SPI's ongoing survey. As of this writing, it was in fourth place among all s-f games in print!

" . . . Presumably this is 'Son of Ogre!' It is good enough to warrant 'Revenge of Son of Ogre.' *G.E.V.* is not as clean as *Ogre,* but probably has more replay value. There are some imaginative scenarios, including one involving an armored train. Probably the best single micro game." – Dave Ritchie, *Moves*

Game components include plastic Pocket Box; 112 backprinted counters; ziplock bag for counter storage; FULL-COLOR map painted by Denis Loubet; 20-page rulebook; two terrain/CRT reference sheets.

Designed by Steve Jackson. For 1 or 2 players. Complexity 5; solitaire playability 8. Playing time 60 to 90 minutes.

G.E.V. and the best-selling OGRE are both available from your local game store for $5.00 each in the new Pocket Box edition. If they're out, you can order from SJ Games. Please add 50 cents per game for postage and handling, unless you're a TSG or F&M subscriber.

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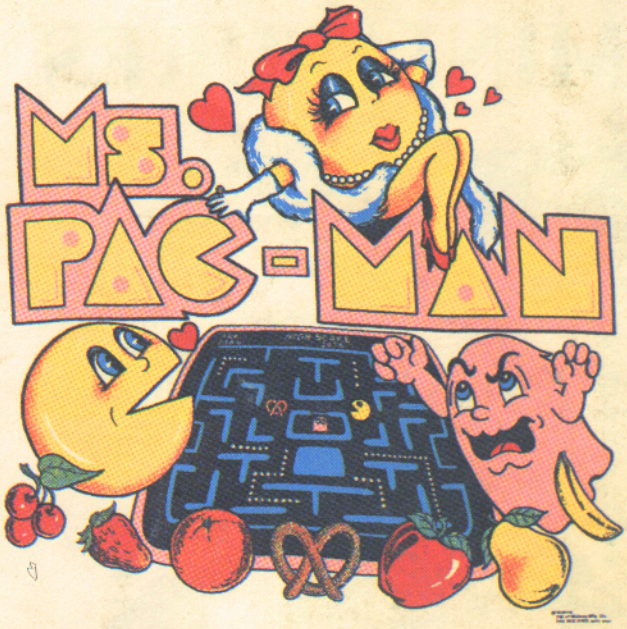

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